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CONFIDENTIAL.

(7816.)

F.O.
424

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

AFFAIRS

OF

ASIATIC TURKEY.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 7655.]

202

1901.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
1	Mr. de Bunsen ..	447 Confidential	Dec. 28, 1900	Murder of Armenian post-office employés. Refers to No. 165. Negotiations with America and France	1
2	To Mr. de Bunsen ..	1	Jan. 2, 1901	Affairs in Shemsdinan and Nestorian country. To thank Major Maunsell for report. Refers to Confidential Paper 7655, No. 162 ..	1
3	Mr. de Bunsen ..	451	Dec. 31, 1900	Agitation in Samos. Transmits letter from Mr. Paton	2
4	„ „ ..	453	31,	Damascus–Mecca Railway. Refers to No. 66	2
5	Admiralty	..	Jan. 3, 1901	Castoboli. Transmits Commodore Grinsloe's report on	3
5*	To Mr. de Bunsen ..	8	8,	Haiffa–Damascus Railway. Conversation with Turkish Ambassador	5
6	Mrs. A. Sidgwick ..	..	..	Kurdish attacks on Armenians. Inquires as to condition of districts of Sassoun and Bitlis. Transmits newspaper account of condition of Aintab	5
6*	Memorandum for Turkish Ambassador	..	14,	Syria Ottoman Railway concession. Terms of	6
7	To Mrs. A. Sidgwick ..	..	15,	Armenian massacres. Conflicting Consular reports on	7
8	Sir N. O'Conor ..	12	14,	Disturbances at Diarbekir. Refers to Confidential Paper 7655, No. 163. Transmits report from British Consular Agent at Mosul	7
9	„ „ ..	14	14,	Agitation in Samos. Refers to No. 3. Transmits Consul Marc's' report contradicting Mr. Paton's account of	8
10	„ „ ..	25	22,	Proposed Turkish steamers on Lake Van. Transmits Acting Vice-Consul Satow's confirmation of order for	9
11	„ „ ..	38	29,	Damascus–Mecca Railway. Refers to Confidential Paper 7655, No. 124. Financial position. Transmits Consul Richards' report of progress of the work	10
12	To India Office ..	..	Feb. 23,	Damascus–Mecca Railway. Transmits copy of No. 11	11
13	Sir N. O'Conor ..	82	26,	Kurdish attacks on Armenians. Transmits despatch from Consul Barnham, who contradicts reports in "Morning Leader" ..	11
14	„ „ ..	89	Mar. 4,	Disturbances at Diarbekir. Refers to No. 8. Transmits despatch from Vice-Consul Jones on conflict between Hamidiehs and Ibrahim Pasha	12A
14A	„ „ ..	96	7,	Haiffa–Damascus Railway concession. Sultan's consent to	12B
14B	„ „ ..	103	13,	Haiffa–Damascus Railway. Refers to No. 14A. Misunderstandings. Transmits note to Tewfik Pasha	12B
15	„ „ ..	106	12,	Damascus–Mecca Railway. Refers to No. 11. Subscription from Emir of Bokhara ..	12C

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
15*	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	73	Mar. 21, 1901	Haiffa–Damascus Railway concession. Refers to Nos. 14A and 14B. Approves action ..	12C
16	Sir N. O'Conor ..	117	23,	Damascus–Mecca Railway. Refers to No. 4. Transmits Consul Richards' report on progress	12D
17	„ „ ..	139	Apr. 10,	District of Erzeroum. Transmits report from Consul on condition of	12D
18	„ „ ..	26 Tel.	28,	Threatened attack by Kurds on Christians in the Tiari Mountains	14
19	„ „ ..	152	23,	Deposition of the Œcumenical Patriarch. Russian intrigues	14
20	„ „ ..	159	29,	Disturbances at Diarbekir. Refers to No. 14. Growth of. Transmits reports from Vice-Consul Jones, with details	15
21	„ „ ..	161 Confidential	May 1,	Attack on village of Zemad reported by Consul at Erzeroum. Refers to No. 17. Transmits despatch from Mr. Lamb, giving sequel of	17
22	„ „ ..	164	2,	Conflict between Kurdish tribes in Lydje district. Transmits despatch from Vice-Consul at Diarbekir on	19
23	„ „ ..	167	4,	Threatened attack by Kurds on Christians in Tiari Mountains. Refers to No. 18. Proposed action of French Ambassador ..	20
24	„ „ ..	172	6,	Deposition of Œcumenical Patriarch. Refers to No. 19. Transmits report of Lieutenant-Colonel Massy on Russian intrigues at Adana	20
25	„ „ ..	184	12,	Threatened attack by Kurds on Christians in Tiari Mountains. Refers to No. 23. Transmits report from Vice-Consul Satow ..	22
26	„ „ ..	186	13,	New Russian Consulates at Kharput and Bayezid. Transmits despatch from Consul Lamb	23
27	„ „ ..	188	14,	Disturbances at Diarbekir. Refers to No. 20. Transmits despatch from Vice-Consul Jones on further developments	24
28	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	119	23,	Threatened attack by Kurds on Christians in Tiari Mountains. Refers to Nos. 18 and 23. Approves action taken	25
29	Sir N. O'Conor ..	193	19,	Attack by Kurds on Christians in Tiari district. Refers to Nos. 18 and 23. Transmits Vice-Consul Satow's report of conflict between Kurdish tribes near Lake Van	25
29*	„ „ ..	206	23,	Haiffa–Damascus Railway. Mr. Hills refuses to sell his concession to Turkish Government. Transmits Memorandum by Mr. Block	26A
30	„ „ ..	209	29,	Disturbances at Diarbekir. Refers to No. 27. Transmits despatch from Vice-Consul Jones on conflict between Shammar Arabs and Turkish regulars	26
31	„ „ ..	210	29,	Disturbances in Turkish provinces. Refers to Nos. 25, 27, and 30. Transmits quarterly report from Consul Barnham at Aleppo on ..	27

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
32	Sir N. O'Conor ..	216	June 4, 1901	Disturbances in Tiari district. Appointment of new Vali of Mosul	29
32*	,, ,, ..	218	4,	Claims. Procrastination and subterfuges of Ottoman Government	29A
33	,, ,, ..	222	9,	Threatened attack by Kurds on Christians in Tiari district. Refers to No. 8. Transmits report from Consular Agent at Mosul..	29
34	,, ,, ..	224	11,	Deposition of Œcumenical Patriarch. Refers to No. 19. Announces election of M. Joachim III. Transmits description of ceremony from the "Levant Herald" ..	31
35	Sir E. Egerton ..	57	14,	Œcumenical Patriarch. Joachim's election approved at Athens	31
36	Sir N. O'Conor ..	230	15,	Threatened attack by Kurds on Christians in Tiari district. Refers to No. 33. Transmits further reports from Consul at Mosul	31
36*	,, ,, ..	235 Confidential	16,	Cruiser contract. Signed as to payment ..	32*
37	,, ,, ..	236	18,	Syria Ottoman Railway Company's concession. Present result of negotiations. Transmits copy of instructions to Mr. Block, and Mr. Hills' agent's account of meeting at the Palace ..	32
37A	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	134 Confidential	July 4,	Cruiser contract. Approves procedure proposed in No. 36*	35*
37B	,, ,, ..	155	4,	Syria Ottoman Railway concession. Refers to No. 37. Approves action	35*
38	Sir N. O'Conor ..	239 A Confidential	June 25,	Bagdad Railway scheme. Terms of agreement between Russians and French. Proposal for formation of British Syndicate to inquire into possibilities for British investors	35
39	,, ,, ..	244	July 1,	Damascus-Mecca Railway. Refers to No. 11. Transmits extract from "Moniteur Oriental" relating to action of Secretary of Turkish Consulate at Bombay	36
40	,, ,, ..	246 Confidential	2,	Bagdad Railway scheme. Transmits report of German and French Syndicates on ..	37
41	,, ,, ..	250	2,	Affairs at Bitlis, Moush, &c. Transmits three despatches from Consul Satow, describing lamentable state of. Recommends transfer of Captain Anderson to Bitlis	38
42	Thames Iron Works, Ship-building, and Engineering Company to Sir N. O'Conor	..	June 29,	Syrian Ottoman Railway. Meeting of Council of Administration. Vote of thanks to Ambassador. After 31st July, price of Railway and concession will be raised to 300,000*l.* ..	42
43	Sir N. O'Conor ..	256	July 10,	State of affairs at Bitlis, Moush, &c. Refers to No. 41. Brought before Minister of Foreign Affairs. Transmits despatch from Vice-Consul Satow on result of inquiry at Berwar	43
44	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	80 Tel.	15,	Haifa – Damascus Railway. His Majesty's Government desire to support Mr. Hills as far as possible, without use of force or naval demonstration	44
45	Sir N. O'Conor ..	258	14,	Fire at Damascus. Transmits report on from Consul Richards	44

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
46	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	83 Tel.	July 24, 1901	Haiffa–Damascus Railway. Asks for statement of present state of matters for Mr. Hills	45
47	,, ,, ..	85 Tel.	29,	Haiffa–Damascus Railway. Mr. Hills accepts Ambassador's suggestions as to sale. In case of sale, Mr. Hills' right of priority as contractor should be remembered ..	45
48	Sir N. O'Conor ..	279	29,	Damascus–Mecca Railway. Refers to No. 39. Extract from "Moniteur Oriental." Mussulmans of Natal subscribe 1,000*l.* ..	46
49	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	107 Tel.	Aug. 12,	Haiffa–Damascus Railway. Asks for information as to state of affairs for Mr. Hills ..	46
50	Sir N. O'Conor ..	303	12,	Haiffa–Damascus Railway. Unsatisfactory result of negotiations. Has warned Tewfik Pasha of possible complications	46
51	,, ,, ..	311	23,	Disturbances at Diarbekir. Refers to No. 30. Further developments of feud between Ibrahim Pasha and Khalil Bey, assisted by Shammar tribe. Activity of Ibrahim Pasha's followers. Transmits Vice-Consul Jones' reports	47
52	,, ,, ..	319	27,	Zeitoun insurrection 1895–96. Collection of arrears of taxes prior to. Representations from French, Russian, Italian, and British Ambassadors successful	50
53	,, ,, ..	324	Sept. 4,	Damascus–Mecca Railway. Transmits extract from "Moniteur Oriental" describing opening of first section	50
54	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	133 Tel.	10,	Attack by Armenians on Moush. Report of through Laffan's Agency	51
55	,, ,, ..	207	10,	Zeitoun insurrection. Refers to No. 52. Approves action	51
56	Sir N. O'Conor ..	111 Tel.	11,	Reported attack by Armenians. Refers to No. 54. Vice-Consul at Kharput reports rumours of massacre of garrison at Sassoun	51
57	,, ,, ..	112 Tel.	11,	Reported massacres at Moush. Mr. Consul Lamb has no confirmation of	51
58	,, ,, ..	328	6,	Vilayet of Van. Transmits despatch from Vice-Consul on improved condition of, confirming report from Major Maunsell's correspondent, M. Defrance	52
59	,, ,, ..	330	5,	Disturbances at Diarbekir. Refers to No. 51. Transmits copy of despatch from Vice-Consul Freeman, reporting escape of Ibrahim Pasha from Diarbekir, and rumour of further affray	53
60	,, ,, ..	333	6,	Massacre of Armenians at Moush. Armenian Gregorian Patriarch fears truth of reports, owing to ominous telegram received by him. Describes interview with Patriarch ..	54
61	,, ,, ..	338	9,	Opening of Russian post-office at Jerusalem ..	55
62	,, ,, ..	341	10,	Massacre of Armenians at Moush. Refers to No. 60. Telegram from Vice-Consul Freeman at Kharput says current report that garrison at Sassoun blown up by Armenian and Turkish revolutionaries. Inquiries being made from Consul at Erzeroum	55

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
63	Sir N. O'Conor ..	344	Sept. 16, 1901	Massacre of Armenians at Moush. Refers to No. 60. Transmits report from Consul at Erzeroum. Turkish Government deny report..	55
64	,, ,, ..	125 Tel.	29,	Haiffa-Damascus Railway. Mr. Hills' agent desires that Mr. Lafone should be warned regarding negotiations between Turkish Ambassador and Mr. Pilling, and that he should be informed of Mr. Hills' proposals to Minister of Public Works	57
65	,, ,, ..	351	25,	Shattak and Mukus districts. Transmits Vice-Consul Satow's report on	57
66	,, ,, ..	352	27,	Opening of Russian post-office at Jerusalem. Refers to No. 61. Transmits report on from Consul Dickson	59
67	,, ,, ..	353	27,	Damascus-Mecca Railway. Refers to No. 53. Transmits despatch of Consul at Damascus, reporting trial trip over completed section ..	59
68	International Permanent Peace Bureau	..	Oct. 3,	Appeal for an official Conference to solve Armenian question by putting into force the plan of reform of 1895	60
69	Messrs. Cox and Lafone	..	10,	Syria Ottoman Railway. Interview with Turkish Ambassador. Frequent interviews with Mr. Pilling and Ambassador. Has informed Ambassador that he and not Mr. Pilling represents Mr. Hills. Suggestions of Ambassador to Mr. Pilling ..	61
70	Sir N. O'Conor ..	362	6,	Disturbances in Diarbekir. Transmits despatches from Vice-Consul Freeman on further developments of feud between Kurds and Shammar Arabs	61
71	Mr. Pilling ..	..	17,	Syria Ottoman Railway Company. Learns from Turkish Government that British Ambassador at Constantinople negotiating sale of Acre-Damascus Railway to Turkish Government, and to secure this sum to Syria Ottoman Railway Company. His objections to this action	63
72	Mr. Lafone ..	..	17,	Transmits copy of letter sent to Turkish Ambassador by him, respecting Syria Ottoman Railway Concession. Suggests cabling substance of it to Sir N. O'Conor	64
73	To Mr. Lafone ..	..	19,	Haiffa-Damascus Railway. Refers to No. 72. Telegram sent as suggested	66
74	Sir N. O'Conor ..	369	20,	Disturbances at Diarbekir. Vice-Consul instructed to visit scene of disturbances, and to co-operate with Russian Vice-Consul. Information as to the state of affairs at Moush from Catholic Archbishop ..	66
75	,, ,, ..	370	21,	Disturbances between Moslems and Christians at Beirout. Transmits report from Consul-General at Beirout respecting	67
76	,, ,, ..	373	25,	New Russian Consulates at Kharput and Bayesid. Transmits despatch relating to from Consul at Erzeroum. New Russian appointment at Erzeroum	67
77	,, ,, ..	379	Nov. 4,	Failure of harvest at Aleppo. Transmits copy of despatch from Consul respecting ..	68
78	,, ,, ..	380	4,	State of affairs at Moush. Refers to No. 74. Despatch from Consul at Erzeroum respecting	69

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
79	Sir N. O'Conor ..	382	Nov. 5, 1901	Haiffa-Damascus Railway. Refers to No. 50. Negotiations brought to a standstill by Mr. Pilling's intervention. The Sultan's proposals for conversion of 1855 Loan ..	70
80	,, ,, ..	387	10,	State of affairs at Moush. Refers to No. 78. Transmits extract from Consul at Van's report, showing that Armenians at Moush inclined to join Orthodox Church	70
81	,, ,, ..	390 Confidential	12,	Bagdad Railway Concession. Transmits summary of Convention respecting. Laid before Imperial Government by Anatolian Railway Company	71
82	,, ,, ..	391	12,	Disturbances in Diarbekir. Refers to No. 70. Transmits copy of despatch from Consul at Diarbekir, reporting continued fighting ..	76
83	,, ,, ..	397	18,	Disturbances between Christians and Moslems at Beirout. Refers to No. 75. Transmits copies of further despatches from Consul-General at Beirout respecting	78
84	,, ,, ..	399	18,	Churches in Homs district. Transmits copy of despatch from Consul at Damascus, reporting claim of Syrian Jacobite community to	79
85	,, ,, ..	409	20,	Instalments due to Messrs. Armstrong for cruiser. Judging from the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and confirmed by the Sultan, this will shortly be paid out of projected loan	81
86	Mr. de Bunsen ..	418	23,	Disturbances at Moush. Vice-Consul at Moush reports thirty revolutionaries besieged by Turkish troops in monastery	81
87	,, ,, ..	420	26,	Earthquake at Erzeroum. Transmits despatch from Consul at Erzeroum respecting ..	82
88	,, ,, ..	421	26,	Consul Freeman's visit to Moush. Refers to No. 74. Report upon it	83
89	,, ,, ..	423	26,	Bagdad Railway Concession. Refers to No. 81. Further Memorandum by Mr. Weakley respecting negotiations	83
90	Mr. Buchanan ..	278	28,	Plenary meeting of German Holy Land Association. Communication made that German Imperial Chancellor has taken steps at Constantinople on behalf of Franciscans in Jerusalem	84
91	Mr. de Bunsen ..	425	28,	Disturbances between Christians and Moslems at Beirout. Refers to No. 81. Transmits despatch from Consul-General at Beirout, reporting condition of town improved ..	85
92	,, ,, ..	426	29,	State of affairs at Moush. Refers to Nos. 78 and 80. Transmits copy of despatch from Consul at Erzeroum. Russians have refused to admit Armenians of that town to Greek Church	86
93	,, ,, ..	433	Dec. 5,	Steamers on the Tigris. Tewfik Pasha denies newspaper report that Minister of Marine wishes to prevent British competition ..	86
94	,, ,, ..	434	8,	Affray between Greek and Latin monks near Church of Holy Sepulchre. Transmits copy of despatch from Consul at Jerusalem relating further to	86

No.	Name.	No.	Date.	Subject.	Page
95	Mr. de Bunsen ..	435	Dec. 8, 1901	Earthquake at Erzeroum. Refers to No. 87. Transmits copies of despatches from Consul at Erzeroum with reference to	87
96	„ „ ..	436	8,	State of affairs at Moush. Refers to No. 89. Transmits despatches from Consuls at Erzeroum and Moush relative to attitude of Russian officials to the movement of Armenians of Moush towards conversion to the Orthodox Church	89
97	„ „ ..	439	9,	Formation of new regiment of Hamidieh cavalry. Transmits copy of despatch from Consul at Erzeroum respecting	90
98	„ „ ..	441	12,	Damascus–Mecca Railway. Refers to No. 67. Transmits copy of despatch from Consul at Damascus, reporting on progress of ..	91
99	„ „ ..	444	16,	Memorandum from nine Deputies of Samian Assembly, setting forth complaints of minority against action of Prince and majority. Appeal to England. Also received by Russian Embassy	92
100	To Sir N. O'Conor ..	294	27,	Steamers on Tigris. Refers to No. 93. Mr. de Bunsen's action approved	92

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CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting Asiatic Turkey.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 7655.]

No. 1.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received January* 1, 1901.)

(No. 447. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 28, 1900.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 443, Confidential, of the 24th instant, I have the honour to report that the contract for the purchase of a cruiser in America was signed on 25th instant, by Imperial authority, between the representative of Messrs. Cramp and the Turkish Minister of Marine. The payment of the first instalment, however, which was to accompany the signature, has been postponed *sine die*. I understand that this is due to the expostulations of Messrs. Krupp's agent, who objected to any payments being made until his own account in respect of naval guns ordered last October was settled. The indemnities for the destruction of American property during the massacres will, of course, have to wait until Messrs. Cramp begin to receive their payments.

I am informed, on good authority, that the second instalment in satisfaction of the French massacre claims, amounting, like the first, to 10,000*l.*, is shortly to be paid, and that one more similar instalment will then be held to have discharged the entire French demand on this account. The money is believed to be derived from the Beyrout-Damascus Railway Company, although the latter is in process of liquidation with a view to a fresh start being made at a lower rate of interest on debentures. The Company is making these payments in consideration of the exceptionally high kilom. guarantee obtained from the Turkish Government by the French Ambassador for the new extension northwards to Hama.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 2.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 1.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 2, 1901.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 438 of the 17th December last, transmitting a report by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van of the state of affairs at Shemsdinan and in the Nestorian country.

I request that you will convey my thanks to Major Maunsell for his report.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 3.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received January 7, 1901.*)

(No. 451.)
Constantinople, December 31, 1900.

My Lord,

SINCE the arrival of the new Prince of Samos at Vathy there has been considerable agitation in the island in consequence of the Edict for the dissolution of the Assembly which marked his accession to the post.

My attention has been drawn to this question by M. Tavlarios, Agent of the Sporades Islands at Constantinople, who regards himself as in some sense as the Emissary of all the Greek islands under Turkish dominion in the Ægean Sea; and M. Gryparis, Greek Chargé d'Affaires, called on one occasion to press for the intervention of Great Britain on behalf of the rights secured to the islanders after the Greek war of independence.

I understand that the Turkish grievance against the Assembly of Samos was caused by a decision of that body instituting a system of secret voting. The resentment of the Samians against the order of dissolution has hitherto prevented fresh elections taking place.

I have counselled prudence to the above-named gentlemen, remarking that there did not appear to be at present a sufficiently plain grievance to justify an appeal to the Powers, and I have not lately heard further from them.

I have, however, received through Mr. Consul-General Cumberbatch a letter addressed to your Lordship by Mr. Paton, an English gentleman long resident in the Sporades Islands, who is also well acquainted with Samos, having written a pamphlet on its constitution.

The letter is inclosed herewith in original, and your Lordship will see that Mr. Paton considers that serious consequences will ensue if the Sultan persists in his present policy towards Samos.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 3.

Mr. Paton to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Calymnos, vid Smyrna [*undated*].

My Lord,

I LIVE near to Samos, but only learn from the "Times" newspaper that matters in that island are becoming acute, since I have no constant correspondence with any one there.

I resided there recently for some time, and, from my experience, I would inform your Lordship that any attempt on the Sultan's part to enforce his will by an increase of the garrison or similar steps, will certainly cause riot and bloodshed, and probably the loss of his rights as Suzerain, since the Powers (Great Britain, France, and Russia) which guarantee the Samian Constitution, will be obliged to intervene.

I am, &c.
(Signed) W. R. PATON.

No. 4.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received January 7, 1901.*)

(No. 453.)
Constantinople, December 31, 1900.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 444 of the 24th instant, transmitting to your Lordship copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus reporting that

Bello had been appointed as Engineer-in-chief of the Damascus–Mecca Railway, I have the honour to state that a German engineer has received a somewhat similar appointment but at a rather larger salary, viz., 24,000 fr. as against 20,000 fr. assigned to M. Bello.

M. Meissner, the German engineer in question, was formerly in the employment of the Salonica Junction Railway; he left for Damascus on the 23rd.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 5.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.—(*Received January 7.*)

Admiralty, January 3, 1901.

Sir,

I AM commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to transmit to you herewith copy of a report, dated the 25th ultimo, from Commodore Winsloe, relative to Castaboli, the site selected as the outlet for the projected branch line of the proposed German railway between Konia and Bagdad; and I am to request that you will move the Marquess of Lansdowne to cause it to be forwarded, together with the attached chart cutting of the locality in question, to Her Majesty's Ambasador at Constantinople, at whose request it has been obtained.

I am, &c.
(Signed) EVAN MACGREGOR.

Inclosure in No. 5.

Commodore Winsloe to Vice-Admiral Sir J. Fisher.

"*St. George*," *at Alexandretta, December* 11, 1900.

Sir,

IN compliance with your telegram No. 7, I have the honour to make the following report respecting Castoboli.

2. The actual whereabouts of Castoboli is uncertain, so this report deals with the only two suitable places on the north side of the Gulf of Iskanderoon, eastward of Ayas.

3. According to Chart No. 2632 there is a place called Castobolum* (said to be the ancient Roman Castobolum), about 8 miles from Ayas, along the coast in a north-east direction, and north-west of Alexandretta 22 miles. There is a slight indentation of the coast line and a sandy beach. The hills, which elsewhere along the coast come right down to the sea, there fall back in an easy slope of no great height and would appear to allow good approach for a railroad. The water is, however, very shallow, the 5-fathom line being over half a-mile from the shore. It is, moreover, open to the south-east, south, and south-west, and at the time it was visited it was impossible to land there owing to a heavy swell. Such a swell would make loading of lighters almost impossible, and even landing at a pier difficult. There is no town or village of any sort close to the beach, but small villages or collections of huts are dotted about the hills.

4. Following the coast line further to the north-east, there is another possible outlet for a railway about 14 miles from Ayas,† almost in the extreme north-east corner of the Gulf of Iskanderoon. The sailing directions say that this spot is claimed by some to be the ancient Castobolum, and it may, therefore, be the outlet selected.

Certainly there are distinct remains of a fort and other ancient ruins. Immediately behind the fort runs the main road to Adanah, winding away in the distance between undulating low-lying hills, which do not appear to offer serious resistance to the making of a railroad.

* Marked (A) on chart.

† Marked (B) on chart.

The water is deeper here than at the first place, and the 5-fathom line is about quarter of a-mile from the shore. It is more protected, but lies entirely open to south-west. The beach is sandy, interspersed with rocky patches. There is no village in the immediate vicinity.

5. Neither of the two places above referred to are, I consider, very favourable spots for the outlet required, but the latter is the better one of the two.

The points in favour of it are:—

(1.) Less open to seaward.
(2.) Deeper water.
(3.) Closer by-road to Alexandretta.
(4.) Probably less out of the line of the projected railway.

There was an entire absence of shipping or boats of any description after leaving Ayas, and the only people seen were strings of natives going along the coast, probably with supplies for our ships in Ayas Bay.

There was no sign of any work having been commenced.

6. A tracing from Admiralty Chart No. 2632 showing the places referred to is attached.

I have, &c.
(Signed) L. WINSLOE.

No. 5*.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 8.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, January* 8, 1901.

DURING my conversation with the Turkish Ambassador to-day I called his attention to the delay which had taken place in arriving at a satisfactory settlement of the questions which had arisen with regard to the Haifia–Damascus Railway and the Salonica post-office.

I understood that the Sultan had promised to grant our request with regard to the former.

His Excellency asked me to let him have a Memorandum in regard to the railway question, and promised that he would call the attention of the Turkish Government to my observation.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 6.

Mrs. Sidgwick to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 10.)

My Lord, 64, *Woodstock Road, Oxford, January* 8, 1901.

SEVERAL friends of the Armenian nation wish to know present facts as to the condition of the districts of Sasun and Bitlis (Eastern Asia Minor) referred to in the extract below.

So far back as the 30th June, 1897 [C. 8716, p. 202], Sir P. Currie writes that the new gendarmerie, "generally speaking, find their interest in making common cause with the Kurds," thus becoming only a fresh source of danger and oppression to the Christian villagers, instead of (as was designed by the Powers) their protectors.

The details here given are those of the massacre of this year at Sbaghank, a mountain village inhabited by shepherd Armenians. The extract is from the "Speaker" of the 22nd September, 1890:—

"Last year the Kurds carried away some 400 lambs which were the property of the villagers. The villagers went to appeal to one of their Chiefs, called Makar, and managed to follow the Kurds and get back their goods. The Kurds have strengthened their bands and have been trying ever since to get their revenge, and when one has no grounds in Turkey for such a policy no one scruples to create one. Ali Pasha, the Military Governor of Bitlis, one day called a strong detachment of the regular army,

and asserted that the village generally was a band of Armenian brigands. The pretext was admitted, and the Government would not permit the Armenians to defend their persons or their goods against the army of the Turks. This army was accompanied by hordes of Kurds, and these armies were allowed to massacre the people, and in a few hours the village was a mass of ruins. They searched out the Chief Makar, and, as he was absent, they took their revenge by killing and mutilating his children and wife. Many women were outraged and many children were killed by the soldiers. The Pasha then insisted that further Armenians were hiding in the church. He gave orders for dried wood to be placed at the doors, set fire to the church, and many perished in the flames.

"Ali Pasha drew up reports of these exploits to the Armenian P. Tchilinguirian, of Bitlis. The number of people massacred was about 200. The inhabitants had not even time to fly; but it seems probable now that the greater part of them were killed outside the village as they tried to hide themselves. At this moment they are pursued by the police as rebels.

"Ali Pasha has proposed to the Government a plan for building military barracks at Sasun in the villages of Guelieguzan, Shenik, Semal, Gouzmaki, and Jaljorik. If that were done it would be the end of the province, and it seems that the Government has approved this plan in full."

The assertion frequently made as an excuse, or, at least, explanation, of these atrocities, viz., that there are revolutionaries in arms in this part of Asia Minor, is no longer plausible. Even in 1897 (as is shown on p. 104 of the Report referred to above) it is shown that the Nationalist parties, called "revolutionary," were willing to refrain from agitation, and, in hope of reforms promised, were waiting, and had waited, until their hearts were sick.

Armenians now in constant communication with the districts above know that, as a matter of fact, no armed resistance exists there; that all talk of "insurrection" is idle; that such reports are usually maliciously fabricated as a pretext for robbery and murder. Moreover, the well-known fear that our Consuls and missionaries have of the word "revolution" points to the fact, not that revolution exists, but merely that it can be mendaciously invented and used for cruel purposes.

Some persons have urged that any more protest on the part of outsiders, even on the part of Her Majesty's Ministers, will have an irritating and exasperating effect on the temper of the Turkish policy. We plead that our experience of the effect of direct remonstrance in many cases shows quite the opposite, viz., that Christian lives are never regarded *until* a protest takes place and public attention may be aroused, and that risk being chronic and deaths almost normally violent in these villages, intervention can hardly make matters worse, and may do good.

If, however, it were proved that interference by irresponsible and unauthorized persons may do harm in this way along with good, yet that of the Acting Representative of our Government can, we believe, do unqualified good, and, if promptly exerted, might once more stay the hand that launches troops upon defenceless people.

That there is fresh massacre apprehended in yet another quarter is plain from the subjoined paragraph from to-day's news (bitterly confirming fears which previous news had led us to form), and we can only refer it to your Lordship and beg you to act quickly, in order, perhaps, to save the lives of the unhappy people of Aintab.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLOTTE SIDGWICK.

Inclosure in No. 6.

Extract from the "Morning Leader" of January 8, 1901.

The Armenian newspaper "Droschak," appearing at Geneva, hears from Alexandria that terror reigns in Aintab, north of Aleppo, as the Turks are preparing massacres.

Enis Pasha also is arming the Mussulman population of Killis, south of Aintab.

The situation of Armenians is desperate, and speedy help is urgently necessary.

[Aintab is 58 miles north by east of Aleppo, with a fort and various manufactories; it has a population of over 43,000. Killis is 34 miles north by west of Aleppo; it has a European Mission station and a population of 20,000.]

No. 6*.

Memorandum for communication to the Turkish Ambassador.

A CONCESSION, known subsequently as the Syria Ottoman Railway Concession, was granted by Imperial Iradé to Mr. J. R. Pilling and Mr. Joseph Elias on the 10th June, 1890 (29th Cheval, 1307), and regranted to them on the 26th September, 1891.

It comprised—

1. The construction and working of a railway from Akka to Damascus, with branches to Haiffa, Bussorah, and Hasbeiyeh (Article 1 of the Convention).
2. The establishment of a navigation service on Lake Tiberias (Article 1).
3. The establishment of harbours and wharves at Haiffa or Akka (Article 1).
4. "A preferential right on equal terms to all lines starting from any point of the coast between and inclusive of Haiffa and Beirout, and terminating either at Damascus or Nawa, and to the eastward or the southward of the lines to be constructed by the concessionnaires" (Article 31).
5. A protective clause against competing railways and tramways (Article 32).

This Concession was afterwards assigned to the Syria Ottoman Railway Company.

Between 1891 and 1898 various efforts were made and Companies formed for the construction of the Akka-Damascus Railway, but owing to the lack of a kilometric guarantee, it was found impossible to raise the necessary capital.

In 1895 Mr. Pilling obtained from the Ottoman Government an extension of three years to the 12th October, 1898, for the construction of the railway.

In July 1898 Mr. Pilling, who had reached the end of his financial resources, approached Mr. Hills, of the Thames Ironworks Shipbuilding Company, with a proposal to undertake and carry out the construction of the railway.

Mr. Hills intimated his readiness to do so if Mr. Pilling would secure a suitable extension of time with certain modifications of the Concession from the Ottoman Government.

Mr. Pilling accordingly proceeded to Constantinople in September 1898, and having negotiated with Mahmoud Djellalladin Pasha, who was then Minister of Public Works, for the required extension of time and modifications, returned with a letter from the Minister, which purported to grant, among other things, a two years' extension of time from the date of the letter (7th October, 1898) for the completion of the railways from Akka, Haiffa, and the Jordan.

It is to be noted that this letter is dated five days prior to the expiration of the extension of time granted to Mr. Pilling in 1895.

On the faith of these assurances Mr. Hills, in accordance with one of the conditions laid down by Mahmoud Djellalladin Pasha, found for the Company and lodged with the Imperial Ottoman Bank, as security for the completion of the undertaking, a sum of £T. 10,000, and he proceeded at once with the construction of the railway from Haiffa to the Jordan.

The work had progressed without interruption for five months and some 30,000*l.* had been spent upon construction, when on the death of Mahmoud Djellalladin Pasha in March 1899, the Company were informed by his successor that the extension of time and the modifications sanctioned by the deceased Minister were valueless, as they had not been confirmed by Imperial Iradé, and that the construction could only be proceeded with at the Company's own risk. No offer was made to release the £T. 10,000 deposited on the faith of Mahmoud Djellalladin Pasha's letter, and that money is still retained by the Ottoman Bank.

Notwithstanding this announcement the construction was for some time carried on by the Company in the hope that the matter might be arranged, but on the 30th June, 1900, it was found necessary to stop the work as all negotiations had proved fruitless.

Mr. Hills had in the meantime spent over 50,000*l.* on the construction of works in addition to the £T. 10,000 caution money, and he had purchased a large amount of plant which could not be delivered until the Concession was regularized.

Since the works were closed further negotiations have been carried on at Constantinople by Mr. Foord, an engineer in the employment of Mr. Hills, with the support of His Majesty's Embassy.

The Minister of Public Works is stated by Mr. Hills to have agreed to the Petition of the Company for the confirmation of the Concession of 1891 in its entirety. This solution is said to have been favourably reported on by the various Ministries concerned.

It appears now to be still awaiting the final approval of the Sultan, and as His Imperial Majesty informed Sir N. O'Conor that he would consider the matter favourably, it was hoped that before this the matter would have been satisfactorily settled.

In view of the large sums expended by Mr. Hills on the faith of Mahmoud Djellalladin Pasha's letter, His Majesty's Government consider that a moral obligation rests on the Ottoman Government to recognize the acquired rights of the Company, and they trust that His Imperial Highness will assent to the Petition of the Company without further delay.

Foreign Office, January 14, 1901.

No. 7.

Foreign Office to Mrs. A. Sidgwick.

Foreign Office, January 15, 1901.

Madam,

I AM directed by the Marquess of Lansdowne to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th instant, and to inform you that no reports of any serious outrages on Armenians have been received recently from His Majesty's Consular officers in Asiatic Turkey.

Efforts have been made by the British Consular officers to obtain trustworthy information of what occurred at Spaghank in July, 1900, but the reports received have been somewhat conflicting. There is reason to believe, however, that the accounts published in the press were at all events greatly exaggerated.

Lord Lansdowne will transmit a copy of your letter to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, who gives constant attention to the question.

I am, &c.

(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

No. 8.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received January* 21.)

(No. 12.)

Constantinople, January 14, 1901.

My Lord,

WITH reference to Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 439 of the 17th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, transmitting a report from the Consular Agent at Mosul on the extortions practised by the Hamidieh on the inhabitants of the districts between Diarbekir and Jezireh.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 8.

Acting Consul-General Melvill to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 36.)
Sir, *Bagdad, December* 10, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to submit, for your information, a translation of a news-letter No. 19, dated the 4th instant, from the British Consular Agent at Mosul.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. J. MELVILL, *Major.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 8.

Mr. Rassam to Acting Consul-General Melvill.

(Translation.)
Sir, *Mosul, December* 4, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report the return last week to Mosul of the Commissioners sent from Constantinople to Kerkook to investigate the conduct of Yusuf Pasha, against whom complaints were made to Constantinople by certain persons, as the Pasha's action in enforcing justice did not suit them. On the arrival of the Commissioners at Kerkook it was proved that the complaints were false, and Yusuf Pasha has been exonerated.

Some days ago a party of the Kocher (migratory) tribe belonging to the Hamidieh troops under Musto Pasha attacked the village of Khanij, inhabited by the Yezidis, and looted all their cattle and sheep, killing five of the inhabitants. This Musto Pasha, taking advantage of his rank in the Hamidieh troops, continually ill-uses the inhabitants of the Jezireh, whom he treats like captives, and he and his followers seize whatever they choose from the merchants of Jezireh, either without payment or at half price, and nobody dare say a word. Besides, he causes considerable loss to the trade between Mosul and Diarbekir by extorting money from the people in charge of rafts on the river, in consequence of which the number of rafts from Diarbekir and Jezireh has decreased. Owing to this the price of some articles has increased. The freight of rafts from Diarbekir to Mosul and Bagdad is now double what it was, owing to a rise in the price of wood for building and fire-wood, as Musto Pasha does not allow a raft or a small float to pass down the river without extorting from each 15 or 20 medjidies. Complaints have been sent against him to Constantinople by the inhabitants, corroborated by the Valis of Mosul and Diarbekir, but without result. The Sublime Porte refers them to Zeki Pasha, the Commander-in-chief of the Army Corps at Erzinghian, who contradicts them, as his Excellency is interested in Musto Pasha and others, and occasionally his Excellency even strongly censures the said Valis for complaints against Musto Pasha and Hadji Agha.

The Kurdish tribe of Herkiyeh have lately attacked the village of Manguish, inhabited by Christians, in the Hamidieh district, and looted whatever they found there; their sheep and cattle were looted by Sheikh Noori last year, so the inhabitants have dispersed and the village has become a ruin.

(Signed) NIMROD RASSAM.

No. 9.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 21.)

(No. 15.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 14, 1901.

WITH reference to Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 451 of the 31st ultimo, I have the honour to report that I have received a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Samos denying the truth of various statements in the London press as to the disturbed condition of the Principality, and stating that all discontent has disappeared with the arrival of the new Prince Governor, Michalahi Bey.

Your Lordship will observe that this account of the condition of the island is in entire contradiction to the views expressed by Mr. Paton in his letter to your Lordship.

I have not yet received any information enabling me to judge whether Mr. Marc or Mr. Paton is correctly representing the political condition of Samos. The latter gentleman is a self-constituted defender of liberalism in the island, and may, perhaps, some day find himself involved in trouble.

I may add that he was for a considerable time a resident in the island, and married a Greek in somewhat humble circumstances.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 9.

Consul Marc to Sir N. O'Conor.

Sir, *Samos, January* 5, 1901.

I AM informed that certain articles have appeared in London and other newspapers stating that this Principality is in a very disturbed state on account of political matters, and I consider that it is my duty to inform your Excellency that there is not a particle of truth in these statements.

It is true that during the administration of the late Prince Vayanni Effendi there was a certain amount of discontent, which was caused by his making himself Chief of a party. This discontent ceased on the arrival of the present Prince Michalahi Bey, who appears to be a thoroughly honest and impartial person, and who will, doubtless, if properly supported, be able to put everything here into proper order, but it is always to be feared that Michalahi Bey, like all his predecessors, will incur the hostility of certain parties here, unless he is willing to do only exactly what they want, whether it is for the interest of the island or not.

I have, &c.
(Signed) DENYS L. MARC.

No. 10.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received January 28.)

(No. 25.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January* 22, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Van, reporting that a contract has been signed with Messrs. Yarrow for the supply of two steamers for service on Lake Van.

The local press here announces that petroleum springs of good quality have been discovered at Baghiri and Gudach and are about to be worked, probably in connection with these steamers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 10.

Acting Vice-Consul Satow to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 50.)
Sir, *Van, December* 26, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report that the Vali to-day informed me that he had received a telegram from Constantinople to the effect that a definite agreement had been entered into with Messrs. Yarrow for the supply of two steamers for service on Lake Van. The question has been under discussion for a considerable time past, but he tells me that it is now settled, and that he hopes that the steamers will arrive in the spring. The cost is to be defrayed by the Sultan's Privy Purse.

The fuel to be used will be petroleum. To this end I am informed that the petroleum wells at Korzut, ten hours distant from Van, will be opened up and worked.

The Vali also talked enthusiastically but in general terms of the development of the coal mines at Norduz and Levan in this neighbourhood, and of the opening up of the iron industry at Shattakh and Norduz.

The proposed steamers will, should no unforeseen obstacle arise to prevent their arrival, prove of great value to this district. The distance between Erzeroum and Van would be reduced three or four days for caravans. The Vali also expressed a hope that the caravan route to Persia might be diverted from Bayejid to pass through Van and on viâ Archag and Kotur to the frontier; but this seems doubtful in view of the unsettled state of the border. Some months ago in the summer a Persian caravan was pillaged near Kotur by Sheref Bey of the Shekak Kurds, since which time they have ceased to visit this city. The Persian Consul here is still trying to obtain compensation to the extent of £T. 600.

Another benefit would be the closer union of the outlying districts on the shores of the lake with the head-quarters of the vilayet, thus enabling the Vali to make his authority more quickly felt. Thus, Adeljivas, with which Hussein Pasha is closely connected, would be brought within a few hours of Van.

From every point of view it is to be desired that this scheme, which, according to he Vali, has really been taken up, be not allowed to drop.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. SATOW.

No. 11.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received February 4.)

(No. 38.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, January 29, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 352 of the 10th October last, I have the honour to report that the "Levant Herald" of the 24th gives the following statements, which are taken from a letter published in a Syrian newspaper, the "Semerat," at Funan, respecting the proposed Mecca Railway:—

At a meeting held at the residence of the Nawab Berk Dzink Mohim Ben Salikeh Kadi, at Hyderabad, which was attended by a number of Ulemas, Seids, and journalists, the Nawab read out a letter addressed by the Ottoman Ambassador in London to the British Government, asking for authority to open a subscription for the above railway. He followed this by reading the reply of the Government acceding to the request.

I am somewhat sceptical about the alleged correspondence between Costaki Pasha and His Majesty's Government, and I am not prepared to say at present that any subscriptions raised in India for the construction of the railway will not be misappropriated.

From local sources I learn that the sums actually encashed, amounting to some 130,000*l.*, and lodged at the Ottoman Bank, have been transferred to the Banque Agricole, a purely Turkish institution, under the control of the Minister of Mines and Forests. I also understand that an order for 10,000 tons of rails, at the price of 156 fr. per ton, has been placed with the Belgian firm of Cockerell.

I have the honour also to transmit an extract from a despatch of His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting on the slow progress of the work actually undertaken.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 11.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 3.)
(Extract.) *Damascus, January 7, 1901.*

THE railway construction works, on the other hand, are progressing so slowly that it is even permissible to doubt whether any real progress can be made at all. The fact that four, not five, as first reported, out of the six engineers engaged in this enterprise, have been summarily dismissed, and that although some 30 kilometres, say 19 miles, have been surveyed, the work has been so slovenly done that it will have to be done over again, would certainly appear to warrant this assertion.

No. 12.

Foreign Office to India Office.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February 23, 1901.*

WITH reference to my letter of the 11th December, 1900, I am directed by the Marquess of Lansdowne to transmit to you, to be laid before the Secretary of State for India, a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople relating to the proposed Mecca Railway.*

This Department has no knowledge of the correspondence stated in the letter published in the Syrian newspaper "Semerat" to have passed between the Ottoman Ambassador in London and His Majesty's Government in regard to opening a subscription for the railway.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

No. 13.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 4.)

(No. 82.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, February 26, 1901.*

WITH reference to the passage in the "Morning Leader" quoted by Mrs. Sidgwick in her letter to your Lordship, copy of which was inclosed in your despatch No. 15 of the 22nd January, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, stating that, so far as he is aware, there are no adequate grounds for the reports as to the alarming condition of affairs at Aintab.

Mr. Barnham is in constant communication with Dr. Fuller, the President of the Aintab College, who could not have failed to inform him if there had been any general apprehension of renewed massacres of the Christians, but who never saw any cause for uneasiness. The French Consul also would have received news from the Franciscan Fathers.

The statement that the Vali, Enis Pasha, is arming the Moslem population, Mr. Barnham declares to be absolutely untrue, and he believes that Enis Pasha is acting on instructions from Constantinople to provoke no question which may lead to interference from foreign Governments.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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* No. 11.

Inclosure in No. 13.

Consul Barnham to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 2.)

Sir, *Aleppo, February* 14, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of the 29th ultimo, transmitting for inquiry and report an extract from the "Morning Leader" of the 8th January last respecting the situation at Aintab and Killis.

I read this alarming statement with much surprise, because I have, throughout the winter, carried on a regular correspondence with the American missionaries of Aintab, who have mentioned nothing which suggests that the Moslem population were preparing a fresh massacre.

The President of Aintab College, to whom I at once applied for information, states that the extract from the "Morning Leader" probably has sufficient foundation to justify its being classed under the head of hasty and unreasonable alarms, to which Christians in the interior have been periodically subject ever since the massacres. Dr. Fuller proceeds to mention certain incidents to which he admits that he at no time attached importance, but which were, no doubt, reported in the Armenian newspaper "Droschak" to be utilized for political purposes.

About Christmas, as Mr. Papazian, Pastor of one of the Protestant Churches, was returning to his home within the College grounds, a number of men armed with clubs and knives, one of them, at least, having a pistol, sprang out from a hiding place beside the path, and attempted to rob him, and the young men who were escorting him home. In the scuffle that ensued two pistol shots were fired at the pastor, and some of the young men were cut and bruised, but the noise of the *mêlée* was heard at the College gate, and the lights and voices of friends hastening to the rescue frightened the robbers away, and no serious harm was done.

A few mornings later, the body of a Christian was found lying in the road some ten minutes' distant from the College grounds with his throat cut and quite dead.

This tragedy had a most dramatic sequel. It appears that a Koordish woman living in Aintab had a child for whom a serious surgical operation was necessary to save its life; that after the operation had been successfully performed, and the child, under the care of its mother and the hospital nurse, was making a rapid recovery, a visitor called to see the woman and child. This person, addressing the woman, asked her whether there was any one present who understood Koordish, and on being assured that there was not, he immediately began to congratulate the woman on a piece of rare good fortune, saying that, although she had been obliged to pay a large sum to the hospital for the treatment of her child, her son had just had the good luck to kill a Ginour, on whose body he had found a much larger sum than she had spent. It happened that the patient occupying the bed next to that of the child understood Koordish, and was able to give such information as enabled the authorities to arrest the murderer, when abundant proof of his guilt was found in his possession.

Somewhat earlier than this six or seven Armenians were arrested for sedition and imprisoned, the case being worked up by a notorious police commissary with the object of extorting money.

There do not appear to have been other incidents, so that we must take these and suppose that they acted and reacted upon the minds of some persons with vivid memories of the past, until they persuaded themselves that the massacres were about to recur. Yet, if anything serious happens at Aintab, I should get the key-note of alarm from the American missionaries, or my French colleague from the Franciscan Fathers, with whom he is in regular correspondence, but Dr. Fuller never saw cause for uneasiness, for he felt very well satisfied at the promptitude and good sense shown by the Governor of Aintab in dealing with these incidents.

It is worth noting that this official, Kiamil Bey Bederkhan, is a son of the redoubtable Koordish Dereh Bey of Bohtan, who perpetrated a great massacre of Nestorian Christians in 1847. I have known several of the sons of Bederkhan Bey, some in office, some in exile, and one, a political refugee, in England. They are all well disposed towards Christians, liberal and anxious to see the introduction of reforms.

As regards the statement that Enis Pasha was arming the Moslem population of Killis, I beg to assure your Excellency that there is not an iota of truth in it. I believe it to be a wanton fabrication inserted in the article expressly to produce a sensation, and it is to be deplored that the British press should copy such paragraphs from revolutionary Armenian journals. When, on the eve of the Sultan's birthday, Enis Pasha

left Aleppo to avoid another unpleasant incident with the foreign Consuls, he proceeded to Killis and remained there three weeks, during which he certainly did nothing which calls for remark. His house was frequented by Moslems, whereas the Christians shunned him as a sort of ogre; seeing little of him, and knowing him only by his evil reputation, there is no saying what new crimes their imagination may have imputed to him. I do not know Enis Pasha, have never seen him, but everything is so quiet, his régime is so devoid of interest for good or ill, that, with my colleagues, I believe that he acts upon instructions received from the Porte to provoke no question which may give foreign Governments a pretext to interfere.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 14.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 13.)

(No. 89.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, March* 4, 1901.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 12 of the 14th January, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir reporting a serious conflict between the Hamidiehs, under Khalil Bey, and Ibrahim Pasha in the neighbourhood of Severek.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 14.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 1.)

Sir, *Diarbekir, January* 22, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to report that some days ago at Karaghetchi, in the neighbourhood of Severek, hostilities broke out between the Hamidiehs, under the command of Khalil Bey, who holds the rank of Kaimakam, and those under the orders of Ibrahim Pasha, with the result that twenty-seven of the Pasha's troops were killed, the total number of the wounded of both parties being about 100.

It appears, however, that while the troops were engaged in hostilities, a body of men belonging to Ibrahim Pasha's forces, having circumvented those of his rival, attacked and devastated Khalil Bey's village, killing his only daughter, a girl of 8 years of age, and on discovering the extent of the injury inflicted by the Pasha's troops, Khalil Bey sent his enemy a message denouncing the atrocity of which he had been made the victim, and declaring that hostilities would be reopened and continued until he himself or Ibrahim Pasha met death in the contest.

Sheikh Faris, of the Shammar tribe, who is also hostile to Ibrahim Pasha, on hearing of these incidents sent word to Khalil Bey, assuring the latter of his sympathy, and promising him the help of his tribe in the struggle against Ibrahim Pasha, and in view of the threatened outbreak the local authorities referred the matter to the Central Government, whereupon orders were telegraphed by His Majesty the Sultan to Behaeddin Pasha, the local Commander-in-chief ("ferik") of the Hamidiehs, who is stationed at Mardin), to proceed to Severek for the purpose of effecting a reconciliation between Ibrahim Pasha and Khalil Bey.

In conformity with these instructions, Behaeddin Pasha arrived here on Wednesday last, and left this city on the following Friday for the disturbed district.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

No. 14 A.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 96.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 7, 1901.*

I HAD the honour to report to your Lordship in my despatch No. 87 of the 2nd instant that the Minister for Foreign Affairs had informed me that he would give me an answer to-day in respect to the Haifa–Damascus Railway Concession.

I called this afternoon upon Tewfik Pasha at the Sublime Porte.

His Excellency said that he had seen the Sultan's First Secretary, and that he was glad to be able to tell me that an Imperial Iradé had been issued instructing the Minister of Public Works to do what was necessary in order to settle the matter.

I requested Tewfik Pasha to express my respectful thanks to His Imperial Majesty. He replied that he would not fail to do so.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 14 B.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 103.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 13, 1901.*

IN my despatch No. 96 of the 7th instant I acquainted your Lordship with the assurance given me on that day by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the Sultan had issued an Iradé instructing the Minister of Public Works to do what was necessary to settle the question of the Haifa–Damascus Railway Concession.

On subsequent inquiry at the Ministry of Public Works I was informed by Zihni Pasha, the Minister, that he had received no such Iradé. He stated confidentially, however, that the matter had been referred to the Hedjaz Railway Commission in order that they might enter into negotiations with Mr. Hills' agent.

In these circumstances I instructed Mr. Block to inform the Sultan's First Secretary of what the Minister for Foreign Affairs had told me, and to add that as far as I could ascertain from Zihni Pasha, the instructions issued with regard to the case were not what I had been led by Tewfik Pasha to expect. Mr. Block was further instructed to press for the issue of categorical orders to Zihni Pasha for the settlement of the question by confirmation of the Concession.

On Mr. Block's carrying out these instructions, Tahsin Bey maintained that orders had been sent in writing to Zihni Pasha as stated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, but after submitting my message to the Sultan, Tahsin Bey returned from His Majesty with an entirely new proposal. He stated that His Majesty intended to purchase the railway and desired that Mr. Hills' agent should enter into negotiations with the Minister of Public Works to this end.

I have now addressed to Tewfik Pasha a note, of which I inclose a copy, pointing out that this message is in direct contradiction with the assurance given me on the 7th instant, reminding his Excellency that there has never been during the course of the negotiations on this matter any question of a sale of the railway, and finally requesting his Excellency to arrange an audience for me in order that I may myself lay the whole case before the Sultan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 14 B.

Sir N. O'Conor to Tewfik Pasha.

M. le Ministre,

I HASTEN to address your Excellency this note, as there seems to be some misunderstanding about the Haifa–Damascus Railway.

On Thursday last, the 7th instant, I called on your Excellency at the Sublime Porte to receive the answer which you had told me on the previous Monday, the 4th instant, you would be authorized to give on that day.

It will be fresh in your memory that you then informed me that an Imperial Iradé had been issued instructing the Minister of Public Works to settle the question. In order that there might be no doubt as to the meaning of your Excellency's words, I asked: "Dois-je donc comprendre qu'un Iradé Impérial a été donné au Ministre des Travaux Publics pour faire le nécessaire afin de régler et terminer l'affaire du Chemin de Fer de Haifa–Damascus" to which your Excellency entirely assented, again repeating the same words of the message.

As in duty bound I duly informed my Government of the Iradé which His Majesty communicated to me by your Excellency.

Desiring however fuller information as to details, I sent to the Minister of Public Works to know if the Firman had been issued, but could receive no definite reply.

This morning I sent accordingly Mr. Block to the Palace to inquire of the First Secretary about the Firman, to request that if it had not been issued His Imperial Majesty would be graciously pleased to lose no time in doing so, in fulfilment of the assurance given to me on the 7th instant by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Some hours later Mr. Block brought back a message from the Palace saying that the Sultan intended to purchase the railway, and desired Mr. Hills' agent to enter into negotiations with the Minister of Public Works to this end.

It will be obvious to your Excellency that this message is totally opposed to the assurances given to me on Thursday, and for which your Excellency undertook to convey my respectful thanks to His Imperial Majesty. It is unnecessary to remind your Excellency that there has never been a question of sale or barter, but of the confirmation of a Concession granted by the Sultan's Minister of Public Works, and approved by a mazbata of the Council of Ministers.

For the above reasons I can only suppose that there is some misunderstanding which will, I trust, be cleared up without delay by your Excellency. I am reluctant to report the latest phase of this negotiation to His Majesty's Government, on whom it would make a very painful impression; and before doing so I shall be obliged to request your Excellency to arrange a day upon which His Imperial Majesty will be pleased to see me, in order that I may lay the matter before His Majesty myself with a view to such treatment being given to a British enterprise of great utility to the Empire as the traditional relations between the two countries entitle me to expect.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 15.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne—(Received March 18.)

(No. 106.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 12, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 38 of the 29th January and to previous correspondence respecting the proposed railway from Damascus to Mecca, I have the honour to report that, according to the Constantinople press, the Emir of Bokhara has recently contributed the sum of 400,000 fr. (16,000*l.*) to this enterprise.

It is stated that this sum has been paid to the Subscription Committee through the Russian Embassy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 15*.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 73.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, March 21, 1901.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 96 of the 10th instant, reporting that you had received an assurance from the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs that an

Imperial Iradé had been issued for the settlement of the question of the Haïdar-Damascus Railway Concession, and your further despatch No. 103 of the 13th instant informing me that no Iradé has been issued, and that the Sultan now proposes to buy the railway himself.

Your Excellency's proceedings in regard to this matter have my entire approval, and I request that you will continue to press the Turkish Government for a satisfactory settlement of the question.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

No. 16.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received April 1.)

(No. 117.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, March 23, 1901.*

WITH reference to Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 453 of the 31st December last, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting on the progress made with the construction of the Mecca Railway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 16.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 20.)
Sir, *Damascus, March 8, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 6 of the 26th January, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that it would appear that a certain amount of progress has been made at Mezerib with the construction of the Mecca Railway since the appointment of Shems-ed-din Bey to the command of the Construction Corps in place of Ali Pasha, who has been recalled. I hear that some 3 kilom. of earthworks have been completed, and that whereas hitherto three soldiers only succeeded in making 1 cubic metre of road per diem, each man is now doing a cubic metre and a-quarter of work in that time.

I understand that the newly-appointed engineers, MM. Meissner and Labella—the former of whom, I might mention, receives 100 Napoleons per month, and the latter 75 Napoleons—are men of capacity and energy, and it is hoped that henceforth the progress of the work will be very much more rapid than it has been in the past.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 17.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received April 22.)

(No. 139.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, April 10, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, containing a Report on the condition of his district during the past three months.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
(Signed) G. BAROLAY.

Inclosure in No. 17.

Report on the Condition of the District of Erzeroum during the Quarter ended March 31, 1901.

THE last three months have passed indistinguished by any events of signal importance, though perhaps somewhat less tranquilly than is usually the case during the initial quarter of the year. The winter continued, as it had begun, exceptionally mild and open, snow at no time falling in sufficient quantities to interrupt or seriously impede communications in this province. The Kurds, therefore, have this year been dispensed from their usual period of enforced tranquillity, and have continued their depredations and their feuds almost as if winter were not. The quarrel between the 34th and 35th Regiments of the (Zeriki) Hamidieh, reported by Acting Consul Massy in his despatch of the 4th July, 1899, broke out afresh, and a dispute which occurred in February between two Toroums of the Jibranli and Hassananli respectively, on the subject of a horse, led to a feud between these two powerful tribes, in the course of which a neutral village of twenty houses, called Zernak, was attacked and pillaged and eighteen or nineteen persons killed, including six out of seven brothers belonging to the family which had given cause of offence to the Jibranli assailants by extending hospitality to their Hassananli foe.

The Haidaranli, Sibganli, and Hassananli in the districts of Melazghird and Boulanyk have also been continually raiding and fighting throughout the winter, and little effort seems to have been made to check or control them.

Owing to the abundance of last year's harvests, the mildness of the winter, and the resulting cheapness of all the commoner necessaries of life, somewhat less has been heard than in the corresponding period of last year, about the crushing severity of taxation. Nevertheless the necessities of the local treasury continue to be most urgent, and there is no doubt that the very uttermost farthing is exacted from the tax-payer. Several instances of imprisonment for the non-payment of the Bedelieh have come to my notice in the town itself, and a case is now under investigation where a villager of Tleng, 7 miles from Erzeroum, is reported to have been beaten to death by the taxgatherers.

The restrictions upon the circulation of Armenians, especially as regards Constantinople and the Russian frontier, are still in force. Nevertheless, a considerable contraband movement to and fro has been signalled during the quarter, and there are not wanting signs of a continuous activity on the part of the revolutionary agencies in the Caucasus, whose ideas, I am assured, are again gaining ground amongst a certain section of the Armenians, too ignorant or too desperate to take warning by the terrible lessons of 1894–95. Some arrests were made in this connection, during the month of February, in the village of Tsetsouk, 7 or 8 miles east of Erzeroum, on the denunciation of a Turkish villager, but were not, I believe, long maintained.

It is, however, in the neighbourhood of Mush that these agitators find the material and the ground best adapted to their operations. The bands circulating in that district appear to be increasing in numbers and audacity, amounting now, it is believed, to upwards of eighty persons. Their principal recently reported exploits include the shooting of four Kurds near the village of Havadorig, several inhabitants of which have been imprisoned in consequence, and of a like number at a small village, called Sushan-medg, which was partially burned in the course of the affair.

The local authorities are incessantly on the track of the "agents provocateurs," but the chief result of their indiscriminate and harassing methods seems to be to drive many villagers, who would otherwise remain neutral, to throw in their lot with the revolutionaries or escape to the mountains of Sasun. I am without direct information from the district in question, but I am assured that the condition of affairs there is again causing considerable anxiety.

While on this subject I may mention a case, which has excited some interest here, viz., that of a Russian Armenian, named Serkes Suvarian. This person, who is believed to have been formerly an officer in the Russian army, was arrested in 1898 near Mush, and sentenced to death by the Tribunal of that place under Article 54 of the Penal Code, for "working with a view to withdraw a province of the Empire from the administration of the Imperial authorities." On learning of this condemnation, the Russian Government very naturally protested against the execution of a sentence rendered in the absence of any Consular Delegate, and negotiations ensued, which ended only towards the close of last year in the transfer of the prisoner to Erzeroum

for a rehearing of his case. This came on last month before the Criminal Court of Appeal in this place, which, of course, confirmed the sentence pronounced by the Mush Tribunal, and it was for a day or two expected by the Mussulman population that he would in consequence be duly hanged in this town. On the formal application, however, of the Russian Consul-General, he was promptly handed over and dispatched to Erivan, where his case will be "revised" by a Russian Tribunal. It is probable that the latter will not inflict a heavier penalty than that of imprisonment for three years, a term which he has already very nearly completed.

Several other matters in regard to which the Russian Consulate has long been endeavouring to obtain satisfaction (notably the shooting of a Russian officer on the Bayezid frontier some two years ago), are about to be discussed by a Special Commission, presided over by Khulousi Effendi, Judicial Inspector of the Vilayet of Sivas, who has already arrived here. The other members of the Commission are: Ali Riza Bey, Mektoubdji, of this vilayet, Akif Effendi, member of the Medjliss-i-Idare, Ali Siri Effendi, Secretary of the said Medjliss, two military officers, and the Russian Consular Delegates.

The want of agreement between the military officials and the civil authorities of the vilayet has continued to be a public scandal and a cause of great embarrassment to the Administration. Despite his own repeated requests to be relieved of his duties, the obvious impediments to the proper working of the Administration arising from the hostility between his adherents and those of the Mushir, and the general dissatisfaction caused thereby, the Vali is still maintained in his position. A statement, which recently appeared in the European press, to the effect that Raouf Pasha was about to be dismissed in deference to the demands of the Russian Ambassador, is believed to have only strengthened the Sultan's disinclination to replace him.

No. 18.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received April 28.)

(No. 26.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, April 28, 1901.*

ACCORDING to a report from the British Consular Agent at Mosul, the Christians in the Tiari Mountains are threatened with an attack by 10,000 Kurds, who have gone thither to rob and murder. Fifteen Christians have already lost their lives.

On receipt of this news, I at once communicated with the Sublime Porte, and Tewfik Pasha has informed me that the local authorities have received peremptory orders to restrain the Kurds and prevent the threatened outrages.

No. 19.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received April 29.)

(No. 152.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, April 23, 1901.*

YOUR Lordship will, doubtless, have seen from the press that the Œcumenical Patriarch has recently been deposed by the Holy Synod. It is generally believed that this event is to be attributed to the influence of Russian Agents, and the Patriarch's unbending attitude in the face of the efforts of Russia to undermine his influence, respecting which I have more than once reported to the Foreign Office, lends colour to this belief. In this connection, I would particularly refer your Lordship to my two despatches, Nos. 114 and 142 of the 28th March and 18th April, 1900, respectively, in which I reported an appeal from the Patriarch to the Emperor of Russia against Russian encroachment, and the unsatisfactory reply received by his Holiness from M. Pobiedonozoff, the Imperial Procurator at the Holy Synod of Russia.

The following account of the reasons for his Holiness' deposition and of the circumstances attending it has been received by Mr. Block from a usually reliable source.

The Patriarch, Constantine, declined to become subservient to Russian Political Agents or to abandon his opposition to the designs of Russia. He had issued a Circular to the Heads of the Orthodox Church in Syria to oppose by every means in their power

the extension of Russian influence amongst his flock; he had refused to take into consideration the indirect overtures made by M. Zinovieff with reference to the abolition of the schism between the Greek and Bulgarian Churches; he had withheld his recognition from the Patriarch of Antioch, elected by Russian influence. Finally, there was the complaint addressed to the Emperor referred to above.

These circumstances made it necessary to find a more pliable person to fill the important post of Patriarch of Constantinople, and, on the 25th of last month, Palm Sunday, assisted by Russian Agents, the Lay Council and Holy Synod met, and, without warning, deposed the Patriarch Constantine on the ground of ill-health, which prevented him from performing his duties. The Porte was informed that the Patriarch refused to accept this decision, and Ziver Bey, the Head of the Department of Public Worship, was ordered to investigate the matter. He found no just cause of complaint against the Patriarch Constantine, and reported accordingly to the Minister of Justice and Public Worship, who stated that, as long as he was Minister, the Patriarch should not be deposed.

In the meantime the Russian Embassy took the matter up, and M. Maximow, the Russian First Dragoman, was instructed to insist on the Patriarch's resignation. Ziver Bey, paid, it is believed, by the Russian Embassy, altered his report, and M. Maximow, after some hours at the Palace, where he stated that if the Patriarch continued in office there would be disorders, was able to report to his Embassy that the Patriarch was to be forced to leave office, and, on the following day, Ziver Bey was instructed to proceed to the election of a *locum tenens*.

The election of the new Patriarch is to take place in forty days. The name of the ex-Patriarch, Joachim, who occupied the Œcumenical throne some seven or eight years ago, and who is now residing at Mount Athos, stands first on the list. He enjoys Russian support, being generally believed to be in receipt of a subvention from that Government. He has done more than any one else to extend Russian influence in Mount Athos, where he has been visited by M. Zinovieff. He is popular with the Orthodox community, and his partisans in Constantinople have gradually been acquiring influence. The Sultan, however, does not like him, and it is just possible that His Majesty may strike his name from the list of candidates, though it is hardly likely that the Palace will be sufficiently determined to oppose the Russian Embassy in this matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 20.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 6.)

(No. 159.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, April 29, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith four despatches from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir showing further developments of the feud in the district of Severek between the Hamidiehs under Ibrahim Pasha and those under Khalil Bey, assisted by the Shammar tribe, the commencement of which was reported in my despatch No. 89 of the 4th ultimo.

Your Lordship will see that the matter has assumed such proportions that the Vali of Diarbekir, the Vali of Mosul, the Commander-in-chief of the Hamidieh troops in the district and other officers have been sent to the scene of the disturbances in order to endeavour to arrange matters between Ibrahim Pasha and the Shammar leader, Sheikh Faris.

In his despatch No. 7, Mr. Vice-Consul Jones reports that Ibrahim Pasha has represented this tribe to the Palace as being incited to revolt by British agents. I have taken an opportunity of pointing out to the Minister for Foreign Affairs the absurdity of such an allegation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 20.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 5.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, March* 12, 1901.

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 1 and 3, dated the 22nd January and the 5th February of the present year, respectively, I have the honour to report that last week three villages, in the neighbourhood of Severek, inhabited by Kurds favourable to the cause of Khalil Bey, were burnt down by a band of Hamidiehs under Ibrahim Pasha's orders, the natives taking refuge in other villages of their faction.

I have the honour to add that no Christians suffered loss through this destruction of the villages, which were inhabited by a population wholly Mussulman.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 20.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 6.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, March* 19, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to report that last week five villages in the Severek district, inhabited by dependants of Ibrahim Pasha, were plundered and burnt down by a band of Kurds under the command of Omar Agha, a local Chief, who is supposed to have perpetrated the deed by way of retaliation for the destruction of the three villages (Katina, Kellakhan, and Dessman) belonging to the followers of Khalil Bey, reported in my despatch No. 5 of the 12th instant.

On the receipt of the news of this outrage the local authorities at once dispatched a band of twenty mounted zaptiehs under the command of Colonel Mehmet Asim Bey to capture and bring here for imprisonment the Chief, Omar Agha, whose followers evidently shrank from entering into direct conflict with the forces of the Government, for the officer named appears to have met with but little difficulty in carrying out his instructions, with the result that the offending Agha is now a prisoner in this city.

The energy displayed by the authorities in this matter contrasts strongly with their systematic neglect to take steps with the view of exacting retribution for the numerous outrages committed during the past year upon unoffending villagers by Ibrahim Pasha's own followers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

Inclosure 3 in No. 20.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 7.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, April* 9, 1901.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 6 of the 19th ultimo, I have the honour to report that some days ago the Hamidieh Commander, Ibrahim Pasha, at the head of his troops, attacked a section of the Shammar tribe, and after a contest in which several lives were lost, succeeded in carrying off 1,000 camels and 15,000 sheep belonging to that tribe.

Apprised of this raid and its disastrous result Sheikh Faris, one of the Shammar Chiefs, telegraphed to the Central Government that unless the Hamidieh leaders, Ibrahim Pasha and Mustafa Pasha, were kept in bounds he could not be responsible for the behaviour of his tribe, while Ibrahim Pasha, on his side, dreading a coalition between the forces under the command of his rival, Khalil Bey (whose contest with Ibrahim Pash was reported in my despatch No. 1 of the 22nd January), and the Shammar tribe, addressed telegrams both to the Commander-in-chief ("Mushir") of the 4th Army Corps, Zekki Pasha, and to the Palace, to the effect that he was in great danger of being compelled to meet a combined attack on the part of his

enemies, and in order to lend a factitious importance to the matter, and thereby enlist the aid of Government troops with a view to overawing the Shammas, he represented that tribe as being incited to revolt by British agents.

On Friday last Azamet Pasha, the Chief of Gendarmerie in this Province, was sent with a body of fifteen to twenty mounted police to Derrik, and on Saturday morning his Excellency the Vali, in accordance with categorical instructions directing him to go in person, and use his influence with the Hamidieh leader, with a view to bringing about an amicable arrangement of the difficulty that had arisen, left for Derik *en route* for Viran Shehr, whither the Mutessarif of Mardin was also ordered to proceed.

I have the honour to add that the Vali has appointed the General of Division ("Ferik") Munir Pasha, to act as his deputy during his Excellency's enforced absence from Diarbekir.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

Inclosure 4 in No. 20.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 8.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, April* 16, 1901.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 7 of the 9th instant, I have the honour to report that, according to the latest information received, his Excellency the Vali of this Province has left Derrik for Rasu'l 'Ain, whither he has been accompanied by Behaeddin Pasha, the Commander-in-chief of the Hamidieh forces in this district, who is stationed at Mardin, and Azamet Pasha, the Commander of Gendarmerie of Diarbekir.

It is reported that at Rasu'l 'Ain these officials will meet the Mutessarif of Mardin, who is ordered to proceed thither from Nisibin, the Vali of Mosul, the Mutessarif of Deir Zor, and the Commander ("Ferik") of the troops at Aleppo, and that a Conference will be held with the view of bringing about an amicable arrangement of the dispute between Ibrahim Pasha and the Shammar leader, Sheikh Faris, who is said to have ordered his tribe to retire to a point at three hours' distance, pending the result of the labours of the Conference to effect a peaceful solution of the question.

It appears that his Excellency the Vali, though instructed to proceed to Viran Shehr, as reported in my despatch No. 7, did not go there, but decided to remain at Derik, in view of the unsettled state of the district owing to the alarming rumours of the hostile advance of a numerous host under the leadership of Sheikh Faris.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

No. 21.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 6.)

(No. 161. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May* 4, 1901.

WITH reference to the attack on the village of Zernak by Jibranli Kurds, recounted by His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum in the report inclosed in my despatch No. 139 of the 10th April last, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a further despatch from Mr. Lamb, in which he gives an account of the sequel of that incident.

Mr. Lamb makes some very interesting observations on the Hamidieh cavalry, and the position they have acquired in Eastern Asia Minor.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 21.

Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 2. Confidential.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, April* 15, 1901.

IN my despatch No. 1 of the 31st ultimo I alluded to the plundering of the village of Zernak by the Jibranli Kurds, which took place in the last days of January, and which has been generally regarded as an outcome of a feud that broke out in the early part of that month between the Jibranli and Hassananli Ashirets, though, indeed, its connection therewith is somewhat difficult to establish.

The principal sufferers in this affair were a family of ten households—seven brothers, their uncle, and two of his sons—who belonged to neither of the neighbouring tribes, being descendants of a Kurd who immigrated three or four generations back from the district of Tahahkitchour.

The assailants were Jibranli and Bilikli (or Bilikanli) Kurds, to the number of over 400, under the personal leadership of Selim Beg, Lieutenant-Colonel of the 82nd Regiment of Hamidieh Light Cavalry, with whom were two Bilikli Chiefs, Izzet and his brother Hussein, one or both of whom were, I believe, subaltern officers in the same regiment.

Their object seems to have been simply plunder, but resistance having been offered, six of the seven brothers, their uncle, and one of his sons were killed, together with several servants and children, many of them having been burned in their houses, the assailants, after the Kurdish fashion, having surrounded the group of dwellings with large piles of hay and then set fire to the whole.

The seventh brother, having pluckily defended his dwelling for some length of time, broke through the ring of besiegers and escaped. The raiders carried off all the live-stock of the family, comprising 2,800 sheep and goats and 50 horses, besides cows, buffaloes, donkeys, and a few women.

There happens, however, to have been an eighth brother, named Mehmed Agha, whose residence being in a neighbouring hamlet escaped the raid. This man repaired first to Khinous, and subsequently to Erzeroum, in the endeavour to obtain satisfaction from the Government. The Petitions which he presented to the Vali were simply referred to Mahmoud Pasha, the Brigadier in general command of the Hamidieh, who in a personal interview with the complainant seems to have expressed himself to the effect that he "could not be expected to sacrifice a regiment of Hamidieh for the sake of one village."

After expending over £T. 40 on Petitions and telegrams to the Mushir and to the Palace without so much as obtaining an acknowledgment of their receipt, this man had recourse to an acquaintance of mine to inquire whether there were not in Erzeroum a German Consul to whom he might appeal for assistance in bringing his case to the notice of the supreme power. Being told that there was no German but a Russian Consulate here, he replied that he knew the Russians would not help him, since it was their interest and their aim to promote disturbances in this country. He was then placed in communication with myself, and I had it in contemplation to solicit the exercise of your Excellency's influence for the purpose of bringing the facts to the knowledge of His Imperial Majesty, when I learned that instructions had at last been issued for the punishment of the offenders.

I have now been informed that on Sunday, the 7th instant, two small parties of regular cavalry, forty-five and fifteen sabres respectively, were dispatched from Khinous to the villages of the Bilikli Abdal and Hussein, with orders to take them alive or dead. The larger party searched the village of Abdal in vain, but the smaller one encountered both Abdal and Hussein in the hamlet belonging to the latter. Being summoned to surrender, the Kurds refused and fired on the troops, killing, it is said, one horse. On the order being given to return their fire, Abdal fell at the first discharge, and his retainers, seeing their leader fall, broke through the small force of regulars and took to flight, being, however, hotly pursued by the latter, who succeeded in accounting for six more in the course of the day without loss to themselves.

Seven hundred head of sheep were recovered from these two villages and restored to the survivors of Zernak.

The Bilikli, no doubt, were selected for punishment as being the weaker and less influential section. Lieutenant-Colonel Selim Beg, who has hitherto ignored the summons of the authorities to present himself in Erzeroum, still remains to be

dealt with, but Mahmoud Pasha left here this morning for Khinous and the Jibranli, warned by the example of their neighbours, may now perhaps be found submissive.

I have gone into this case at length, partly because it is the first considerable one of which it has happened to me to obtain the details at first hand, and partly because it now appears to be entering upon an unwonted phase. The case itself, however, is only typical of what is going on all over Kurdistan, and typical also of the manner in which such occurrences have hitherto been envisaged by the local authorities. The Vali has more than once admitted in my hearing alike his impotence and his vexation thereat. Whenever the culprits are covered by the Hamidieh badge the matter becomes one for the military authorities to deal with, and what their attitude towards such matters has been is sufficiently indicated by the expression attributed to Mahmoud Pasha, which is characteristic of his well-known sentiments upon the subject, as well as of those believed to be entertained by the Mushir. If one assume the accuracy of his two chief premisses, viz., that war with Russia in the near future is inevitable, and that the services of the Hamidieh cavalry in that event will be of the highest military value, one can hardly be surprised at a professional soldier taking that view of the situation. I see, however, no reason for believing implicitly in either premiss, while I know that the Russian Representatives here, whatever may be their opinion on the first point, are far from sharing the Pasha's convictions in regard to the second. In the meantime the country is being devastated after somewhat the same fashion as has reduced so much of the Pashaliks of Mosul and Bagdad to the condition of a desert interspersed with dying townships, while the little that remains of its wealth passes into the spendthrift hands of a limited number of Kurdish Beys or Torouns, whose fidelity and patriotism have yet to be proved, and whose contributions to the State are practically restricted to rendering a military service, the necessity of which is as much a matter of conjecture as its effectiveness in case of need.

If, therefore, the orders now tardily issued, as a result of Mehmed Agha's courageous and persistent representations, should prove to mark a new departure in the treatment of the organized brigandage now identified with the name of the Hamidieh, his £T. 40 will not have been expended in vain, and he himself may fairly claim to have deserved well of his country.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

No. 22.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 13.)

(No. 164.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, May* 2, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting a conflict between Kurdish tribes in the Lydjé district, in which some twenty lives were lost.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 22.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 9.)

Sir, *Diarbekir, April* 16, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to report that four or five days ago hostilities broke out between the Kurds of the Lydjé district in this province, and those of Djebaghtchur in the Vilayet of Bitlis, with the result that about twenty lives were lost, according to the official statement sent by the Kaimakam of Lydjé.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

No. 23.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 13.)

(No. 167.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 4, 1901.*

IN my telegram No. 26 of the 25th ultimo, I informed your Lordship that on receipt of a telegram from the Consular Agent at Mosul reporting that the Christians of the Tiari district were threatened with an attack from 10,000 Kurds, and that fifteen had already been massacred, I had brought the matter to the notice of the Minister for Foreign Affairs who assured me that peremptory orders had been sent to the local authorities to restrain the Kurds and prevent the threatened outrages.

I am now further informed by Tewfik Pasha that for many years there has been a feud between the people of Tiari and some of the tribes of the district of Amadia, and that on learning recently that there was danger of an outbreak of hostilities, the Vali of Mosul lost no time in taking steps to prevent a collision, and owing to the warning addressed by him to the leader of the Kurds, the cause of the dispute between the two parties has now been removed. The statement that fifteen Christians had been killed is denied in the official reports received by the Porte.

I am informing Dr. Nimrud Rassam of Tewfik Pasha's replies to my representations, and I take this opportunity of mentioning, that upon my informing the French Ambassador of the reports I had received from Mosul and the representations I had made to the Sublime Porte, he said that he would support the representations I had made, and to this effect send up his First Dragoman to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the afternoon.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 24.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 13.)

(No. 172.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 6, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 152 of the 23rd April and to previous correspondence respecting the extension of Russian influence among the Orthodox Christians in Turkey, I have the honour to transmit the accompanying copies of two despatches from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Adana respecting the intrigues of Russian Consular officers to secure the deposition of the present Orthodox Bishop of Adana, who is opposed to Russian designs, and the election of a Russophil candidate in his place.

Lieutenant-Colonel Massy reports that the latter's supporters are for the moment discomfited owing to the recent failure of an attempt, apparently under the auspices of the Russian Vice-Consul, to create a disturbance in the Greek Church of Adana during divine service, but Colonel Massy anticipates that further efforts will be made by the Russian party to obtain the See of Adana for their candidate, an event which would, in Colonel Massey's opinion, be followed by the opening of Russian free schools and a great increase of Russian political influence in the district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 24.

Lieutenant-Colonel Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 18.)
Sir, *Adana, April 17, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that the question of the two parties amongst the Orthodox population, mentioned in my despatch No. 9 of the 27th April, 1900, and Mr. Acting Vice-Consul Satow's despatch No. 18 of the 8th July, 1900, of this vilayet, has again arisen during the last few days. I was informed that the Arab Orthodox party had gained fresh recruits, bought over by the promises of the Russian Consul at Tarsus and the Russian Consular Agent at Mersina, that free Russian schools

would be opened, and Russian support be forthcoming for all who would vote for the Arab Bishop. The present Bishop, who is against Russian designs, was to be expelled from the Greek Church at Adana, the church being seized by the Arab party last Sunday.

The French Consul joined me in my unofficial efforts to prevent a disturbance and bloodshed, and we therefore asked the Vali to be so good as to warn all the Orthodox population against any act of violence, which could only end in a serious conflict.

He took the necessary steps, warning the people and placing guards at certain points, so that no disturbance has yet occurred.

As this question is one in which the Russian Consular officials are deeply interested, we must be prepared for fresh efforts to gain success for the Arab party.

The arrival of an Arab Bishop would be quickly followed by the opening of Russian free schools and a great increase of Russian influence.

The Russian Consular Agent at Mersina lately told me that they were only waiting for the settlement of the Church question in order to start their schools.

It is significant, in connection with the above, that the American Protestant, French Catholic, and Hellenic Orthodox schools are all being closed where formal permits for these are not forthcoming, although these schools have been open and unnoticed for fifteen or twenty years.

It may be inferred that the Russian party is in league with some of the local officials in this matter, in return for some moral support given or promised to them.

It is certain that the Russians spare no trouble to increase their prestige and influence along this coast. During the visit of the Russian squadron to Mersina in December last Admiral Birileff drank publicly, at an entertainment on board his flag-ship, to the health of the "new Russian province, Manchuria." I was not present. The German Consul was. Such a toast may have been not quite a tactful one, but it is, nevertheless, significant. I only heard of this recently on perfect authority, or I should have sooner reported it to your Excellency.

In conclusion, I must inform your Excellency that in spite of these efforts on the part of Russia our own influence appears to be making progress, and the feeling towards England is more friendly than it has been for many years past. I have no local difficulty in the more ordinary matters connected with the Government, and every official appears to be anxious to avoid more weighty questions being referred to your Excellency, knowing, doubtless, that this is calculated to do them harm at Constantinople, and I beg to offer my most respectful thanks to your Excellency for the support which makes easy the settlement of all questions affecting British local interests.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
His Majesty's Vice-Consul.

Inclosure 2 in No. 24.

Lieutenant-Colonel Massy to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 19.)
Sir, *Adana, April 24, 1901.*

WITH reference to my last despatch, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that an attempt was made last Sunday by the Arab Orthodox party to create a disturbance in the Greek church.

The Russian Vice-Consul, who resides at Tarsus, M. Sidericoudi, came up to Adana on purpose and attended service, accompanied by some twenty members of the Arab party. One of these presented a paper to the Bishop, asking him to read it. As it was a prayer for the Antioch Arab Archbishop, the Bishop refused. A disturbance was beginning, but some of the leading members of the Greek Orthodox party explained that they must resist with force any attempt to constrain them to read this prayer, upon which the Russian Vice-Consul left the church, and the others soon dispersed.

The Wali had already warned them to cause no disturbance. The Russian Vice-Consul had previously visited the Wali in order to enlist his support. He told the Wali that the Greeks had elected a certain Papouchoglou as the Vekil or representative of the Antioch Archbishop in Adana, asking the Wali to recognize him. The Wali refused, it is said, remarking that Papouchoglou was a blackguard, a gambler, and a drunkard, and if a representative were necessary, he should be a worthy one.

For the moment the Arab party—or, as one might more properly call it, the Russian

piety—is temporarily discomfited, but I think by no means finally defeated. I understand that efforts will now be made at Constantinople to have orders sent to the Wali for the removal of the present Bishop, as the Wali states that he is powerless to act without such orders. As the Wali cares nothing for the future importance of this Russian intrigue, he will do all he can to ingratiate himself with the Russian Vice-Consul as soon as he can legally do so. We must expect further developments before long.

The Russian Consular Agent at Mersina spoke to me lately on this subject, and he told me that they must now work for the removal of the present Bishop. I explained to him, in reply to his queries, that I had entered into the case to avoid bloodshed, and as being interested in the Greeks owing to my recent protection of their interests, as it appeared to me to be an undesirable example to the Moslems of discord amongst our co-religionists that the Orthodox parties should kill or wound each other in their church during divine service. He agreed with me that this was to be avoided, but he and his father-in-law, M. Sideriendi, are by no means pleased that they should have any obstacle placed in the way of this glaringly apparent political intrigue.

If I enter into these details, it is because this matter is causing much stir in the vilayet. It is openly stated that this is the preliminary step to the opening of Russian schools and other institutions, and to a preponderance of Russian influence.

During a conversation with Dr. Jewett, United States' Consul at Sivas, yesterday, that gentleman told me that Russian missionaries have been arriving in the eastern parts of Turkey in Asia during the last six or seven months.

M. Mavromati, Russian Consular Agent at Mersina, told me two days ago that Admiral Birileff had publicly drunk to the prosperity of the "new Russian province, Manchuria," during his last visit to Mersina. This confirms what I said in my last despatch to your Excellency.

I am careful to do nothing which could give rise to any friction with my Russian colleagues, with whom I am on the very best of terms; and any action which I take is unofficial in giving advice and friendly assistance to the Greeks, who look to me for this owing to my having afforded them protection for more than a year at the time of rupture of Turco-Hellenic relations.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY,
His Majesty's Vice-Consul.

No. 25.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 24.)

(No. 184.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 12, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 167 of the 4th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on a conflict between Kurds at Arjish, and making some observations on the condition of affairs between the Hekkiari and the Syrians of Tiari.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 25.

Acting Vice-Consul Satow to Sir N. O'Conor.

Sir, *Van, April 29, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to report that last week a conflict took place near Arjish, on the north shore of the lake, between two Kurdish tribes, the Haideranli, the head of which is the notorious Hussein Pasha, and the Kalkauli, which is under Abd-ul-Hamid Bey's leadership. The fighting was begun by Hussein Pasha's men, and in the conflict which ensued some seven or eight men were killed on each side, while the wounded of both parties amounted to about twenty-five or thirty. The combatants threatened to carry on the fighting within the town itself, but were warned that, if they did so, the troops stationed there would be used against them. The quarrel is probably the result

of the traditional enmity between the tribes, and not, as has been said, the taking of revenge for the attack made recently on a Turk, Hassan Agha by name, who was wounded by some Kalkanli in Arjish. The Mal Bey (Chief of the Gendarmerie) has left Van for the scene of the disturbance, but it is doubtful whether anything will be done as to Hussein Pasha, who was the originator of the disturbance.

News has reached here from Bitlis that there was a considerable panic there a short time ago. It is stated that a rifle was fired in the bazaar with a view to beginning a disturbance against the Christians. As a result, the bazaar was closed for several days. Some six or eight persons supposed to be implicated in the affair were arrested and imprisoned by the Vali. The latter seems ready to protect the Christians, and they realize this.

In Hekkiari a raid was made on the 22nd March by the Mira of Burwar against a sheepfold of the Ashita Syrians, in which 4,000 or 5,000 head of sheep were carried off. At the same time, four men, two boys, and three women were killed. This Mira is the murderer of Malik Yussuf of Lizan, Tiari, who was killed last October. He is resident in the Mosul Vilayet, and the authorities seem disinclined to punish him in any way for this crime. This is most unfortunate, as he is a constant source of trouble to the Syrians, who seem ready to take the law into their own hands, and are the more disposed to do so as they have received offers of help against the Burwari from the Kurdish Agha of Chol, with whom they are on friendly terms. Mr. Heazele, of the Archbishop's Mission, is at present in Lower Tiari, and has so far succeeded in restraining the Syrians, but when he returns to Kochannes it is impossible to say what they will do.

The Heshi and Zebari Kurds are reported to be meditating a raid on Chol, where the sheep of the Tkhuma and Tiari Syrians (Malik Berkhu) now are.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. SATOW.

No. 26.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 20.)

(No. 186.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 13, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 37 of the 29th January last, I have the honour to transmit to your lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the Russian Government has decided to create a Consulate at Khurput and a Vice-Consulate at Bayezid.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 26.

Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 5.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, May 1, 1901.*

IT is probably within your Excellency's knowledge that, from the commencement of the current year, the Russian Government decided on the creation of two new Consular offices in this district, viz., a Consulate at Khurput and a Vice-Consulate at Bayezid.

I am now informed that the former post has been filled by the transfer of M. Skrialdine from Adrianople (which is to be reduced to the rank of a Vice-Consulate), while the latter is to be given to Prince Boris Chakhovskoy, who has been acting for the past ten months as Chancelier to the Consulate-General in this town, and previously in a like capacity at Damascus.

The nomination of an Agent at Bayezid is perhaps justified by the frequent occurrence of frontier incidents in that region, which it is difficult to control from here, but I do not know what ground exists for the creation of a full Consulate at Kharput, unless it be the proximity of the Dersim, which I take to be the one district of Kurdistan to which Russian influence has hitherto failed to penetrate.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

No. 27.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 20.)

(No. 188.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 14, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting that the Vali has failed to arrange the differences between the Hamidieh troops under Ibrahim Pasha and the Shammar tribe (see my despatch No. 159 of the 29th ultimo).

I have since received a telegram from Mr. Jones to the effect that this tribe are said to have attacked the town of Veranshehir, and that all the available troops in Diarbekir have been sent with a large quantity of arms and ammunition to the disturbed district. Mr. Jones hears also that reinforcements are to follow from Malatia, Serl, and Erzingian.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 27.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 10.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, April 30, 1901.*

WITH reference to the contest between the Shammar tribe under Sheikh Faris and the Hamidiehs under their leader, Ibrahim Pasha, reported in my despatch No. 8 of the 16th instant, I have the honour to report that his Excellency the Vali of this province, having been unable to bring about an amicable solution of the difficulty on the occasion of his recent visit to Tell Ermen, whither the rival Chiefs had been invited to proceed to confer with his Excellency, a proposal rejected by both parties, returned a few days ago to Mardin, where he has recently been joined by Ibrahim Pasha himself and Azamet Pasha.

It is now rumoured that the Shammars are advancing northwards, and although, according to information received from a reliable source, orders had been sent from Constantinople directing the local authorities here to refrain from sending the regular forces against the Shammars, I have the honour to report, further, that yesterday an Imperial Iradé was received by the Commander-in-chief of the Military Forces, Munir Pasha (who is now acting as the Vali's representative during his Excellency's absence), instructing him to summon all the available troops within the province, and to send at once, with the arms and ammunition that are to be obtained in the nearest depôts, two battalions, to be placed under Ibrahim Pasha's orders, to support him in the event of an attack on the part of the Shammars.

I have the honour to add that the Acting Vali is said to have pointed out that there were at most 122 troops available in this city, and that if these were withdrawn he could not be responsible for the maintenance of order in Diarbekir.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

No. 28.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 119.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, May 23, 1901.*

I RECEIVED your Excellency's telegram No. 26 of the 25th ultimo, informing me that you had called the attention of the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs to a report of the threatened attack on the Christians of the Tiari district by 10,000 Kurds, and that his Excellency had assured you that stringent orders had been given to restrain the Kurds.

I have also received your despatch No. 167 of the 4th instant reporting a further communication which you have received from Tewfik Pasha on the subject.

Your Excellency's action in the matter is approved by His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 29.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received May 27.)

(No. 193.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 19, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from the acting Vice-Consul at Van reporting a conflict near Arjish on the northern shore of Lake Van between two Kurdish tribes, the Haidaranli and Kalkanli.

In the penultimate paragraph Mr. Satow mentions the disorders in the Tiari district, reported some three weeks ago by the Consular Agent at Mosul. (See my telegram No. 26, and my despatch No. 167 of the 4th May.)

As your Lordship is aware I made representations regarding this matter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs who informed me some days later that according to the official Reports no loss of life had occurred, and that owing to the steps taken by the local authorities the cause of dispute between the Kurds and the Tiari Christians had been removed.

I am informing Mr. Satow of my representations and of Tewfik Pasha's reply.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 29.

Acting Vice-Consul Satow to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 10.)
Sir, *Van, April 29, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to report that last week a conflict took place near Arjish, on the north shore of the lake, between two Kurdish tribes, the Haidaranli, the head of which is the notorious Hussein Pasha, and the Kalkanli, which is under Abd-ul-Hamid Bey's leadership. The fighting was begun by Hussein Pasha's men, and in the conflict which ensued some seven or eight men were killed on each side, while the wounded of both parties amounted to about twenty-five or thirty. The combatants threatened to carry on the fighting within the town itself, but were warned that, if they did so, the troops stationed there would be used against them. The quarrel is probably the result of the traditional enmity between the tribes, and not as has been said the taking of revenge for an attack made recently on a Turk, Hassan Agha by name, who was wounded by some Kalkanli in Arjish. The Alai Bey (Chief of the Gendarmerie) has left Van for the scene of the disturbance, but it is doubtful whether anything will be done as to Hussein Pasha, who was the originator of the disturbance.

News has reached here from Bitlis that there was a considerable panic there a short time ago. It is stated that a rifle was fired in the bazar with a view to commencing a disturbance against the Christians. As a result the bazar was closed for several days. Some six or eight persons supposed to be implicated in the affair were arrested and imprisoned by the Vali. The latter seems ready to protect the Christians and they realize this.

In Hekkiari a raid was made on the 22nd March by the Mira of Burwar against a sheep-fold of the Ashita Syrians, in which 4,000 to 5,000 head of sheep were carried off. At the same time four men, two boys, and three women were killed. This Mira is the murderer of Malik Yossef, of Lizan (Tiari), who was killed last October. He is resident in the Mosul Vilayet, and the authorities seem disinclined to punish him in any way for [illegible]. This is most unfortunate as he is a constant source of trouble to the Syrians, who are ready to take the law into their own hands and are the more disposed to do so as they have received offers of help against the Burwari from the Kurdish Agha of Chol, with whom they are on friendly terms. M. Heazell, of the Archbishop's mission, is at present in Lower Tiari and has so far succeeded in restraining the Syrians in their desire for vengeance, but when he returns to Kochannes it is impossible to say what they will do.

The Herki and Zebari Kurds are reported to be meditating a raid on Chol, where the sheep of the Tkhuma and Tiari Syrians (Malik Berkhu) now are.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. SATOW.

No. 30.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 10.)

(No. 209.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 29, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 188 of the 14th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting on a conflict between the Shammar Arabs and the Turkish regular troops, in which the former were forced to retire with a loss of sixty killed.

I am, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 30.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 12.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, May 14, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 11 of the 7th instant, I have the honour to report that on Friday, the 10th instant, the three companies of regulars, mentioned therein as having been sent from Sest, after spending a few days in the barracks here left for Viran Shehr.

The arms and ammunition forwarded with the troops that left this city on the 3rd instant were to have been distributed among Ibrahim Pasha's followers, in accordance with orders to that effect received from the Mushir (Commander-in-chief) of the 4th Army Corps at Erzingan, but subsequent orders sent from the Seraskerate, through the Mushir countermanding the first instructions, enjoined upon the local military authorities the necessity of withholding the arms and ammunition from the Hamidiehs, and those authorities were directed to demand the immediate restitution of all arms and ammunition that might have been distributed in conformity with the previous orders.

I have the honour to add that his Excellency the Vali, who is still at Mardin, has there received orders to refrain from interfering in any way with Ibrahim Pasha, to whom the Mushir will communicate directly from Erzingan the wishes of the Imperial Government.

With regard to the course of events in the disturbed district, I am informed that Ibrahim Pasha twice attacked the Shammars and was on both occasions repulsed, with the result that more than 200 of his troops were killed and about 200 wounded, whereupon Azanet Pasha suggested a combined attack on the part of the cavalry under his orders and the regular troops upon the Shammars, a suggestion rejected by the regulars, who are well known to entertain but little goodwill towards the Hamidiehs. The forces under Azanet Pasha's orders, however, obeyed his commands, and the Shammars retired after a loss of about sixty men killed, several of their women and children being taken captives to Viran Shehr.

No. 29[1].

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 3.)

(No. 206.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, May 23, 1901.*

WITH reference to previous correspondence respecting the Haifa–Damascus Railway, I have the honour to report that Mr. Hills arrived in Constantinople on the 11th instant. He leaves to-day for Syria, with the intention of returning about the 12th June, but I regret to say that so far no progress has been made by him towards the attainment of his object.

On his arrival here I obtained, at his request, orders from the Sultan to the Minister of Public Works to enter into negotiations with him.

From the inclosed Memorandum by Mr. Block, who accompanied him on his first visit to Zihni Pasha, your Lordship will understand the attitude assumed by the two parties. On the one hand, the Turkish Minister held fast to the declaration that the Turkish Government had decided to construct the line itself; that if later it should be decided to have the work carried out by a contractor Mr. Hills would be employed for that purpose; and that, in the meantime, Mr. Hills would be paid back by Turkey all that he had spent on the line hitherto.

Mr. Hills, on the other hand, declined to abandon his rights, and insisted on the confirmation of the original Concession of 1891, modified only to suit the Ottoman Government, by an offer which he was prepared to make, to take the line after crossing the Jordan to Mezarib, or somewhat to the west of the original direction, and to construct from Mezarib to Damascus a broad-gauge railway in the place of the existing French narrow gauge.

At a second interview with the Minister of Public Works Mr. Hills receded somewhat from this position. His proposal was to construct the line for Turkey on the following terms: the capital to be found by Mr. Hills; cost of construction not to exceed mean cost of the three principal railways in Asia Minor; length of line not to exceed 300 kilom.; Ottoman Government to pay 6 per cent. annually on the capital sum, which would thus be extinguished in fifty years, and to give for payment of the interest a guarantee upon the revenues of certain districts.

This proposal was at first favourably received by Zihni Pasha, but at the next meeting Mr. Hills was categorically informed that no engagement could be taken to give him a contract.

Mr. Hills has throughout refused to accept any settlement based on the mere purchase of the line already constructed and an indemnity by way of compensation. He appears to believe that a contract, such as the one indicated above, would lead in the end to the acquisition of the line by himself on the failure of Turkey to pay the stipulated interest, and that in this way he would more surely recoup himself for the expenditure incurred in the construction of the line. Your Lordship is aware that in my opinion Mr. Hills' claim to the Concession is legally a weak one. The original Concession expired long ago, and the modified arrangement accepted by the late Minister of Public Works never received the Imperial sanction.

The probability is that Mr. Pilling, when he parted with his Concession to Mr. Hills, was aware of this flaw. But, however this may be, it is difficult to uphold a Concession which has been twice, in 1896 and 1898, nullified by the non-fulfilment of the contract by Mr. Pilling, and still more difficult from the fact that Mr. Hills bases his ownership upon a letter from the Minister of Public Works unconfirmed by an Iradé, and which, even were it recognized, Mr. Hills appears unwilling to accept owing to certain objectionable clauses to the effect that the line shall be built in section, and that after each section is finished fresh negotiations are necessary before the work can be continued.

Your Lordship has already learnt by my despatch No. 166 of the 3rd instant the attitude of the Sultan on this matter. His Majesty absolutely declined to confirm a Concession which he regarded as null and void in the absence of an Imperial Iradé, but he asked me to invite Mr. Hills to come here and enter into negotiation with his Minister of Public Works. If he came, His Majesty said he would not only indemnify Mr. Hills for his previous expenditure, but "he would give him the construction of the line for the count of the Ottoman Government; he would buy from him the necessary materials, and he would even go further, and would promise to buy from him also the materials of the Hedjaz Railway."

I have given Mr. Hills every support in my power. I have also thought it advisable, pending the conclusion of the negotiations, to tell the Ottoman Government that I reserved all the rights secured by the Concession; that if they can come to terms with Mr. Hills on the lines suggested by His Imperial Majesty, I have nothing more to say; but if they fail to do so, I shall be obliged to report to your Lordship exactly what has taken place, and leave your Lordship to decide as to the steps to be taken.

The Sultan will probably hold fast to his long-established maxim that a railway terminating on the Mediterranean is against the interests of his Empire. He is, at the same time, prepared to deal very liberally with Mr. Hills; but Mr. Hills says he prefers his schemes to his money, and that he will not give up a project which promises sooner or later to place in British hands an important artery of the Empire.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 29*.

Memorandum by Mr. Block.

I ACCOMPANIED Mr. Hills yesterday to the Department of the Minister of Public Works. The Minister had been instructed to deal with Mr. Hills respecting the Haifia–Damascus Railway, as the Sultan had promised you on the preceding day.

The Minister said that the Sultan's First Secretary had instructed him to inform Mr. Hills that the Turkish Government had definitely decided to construct the line itself; if later it should be decided to have the line built by a contractor, the building of the line would be conceded to Mr. Hills for the account of the Ottoman Government, and, in the meantime, the Turkish Government would repay Mr. Hills everything that he had spent.

Mr. Hills replied that the proposal was quite out of the question, and was most unsatisfactory; he had done business with the Turkish Government in years past; he had built for them the iron-clads "Mahmoudie," "Meffoudie," and "Izzedin;" he had always experienced fair treatment at their hands; he believed in their good faith, and on that account he had gone into the present business, from which he did not intend to withdraw. He demanded the confirmation of his Concession of 1891. He would, to suit the convenience of the Ottoman Government, build the line to Mezarib; from there to Damascus, he would convert the narrow-gauge French line to a broad gauge, thus saving the Turkish Government from the expense of building that part of the Damascus–Hedjaz line; he would construct for their account the line south from Mezarib to Mecca—he could do this at half the price the Turkish Government could do it for themselves; he would build the port at Caifia; he would convey their material for the railway to the Hedjaz, a great quantity of which was lying at Beirout, at low rates to Mezarib; he was in a position as a great railway constructor to render them great assistance; he was at present building 400 miles of railway in South Africa, and was engaged in the construction in England of a line which would cost 3,000,000*l.* He expected to finish the matter at once, and must decline any proposal of the kind suggested.

The Minister said that there was no question of bad faith; were it so, the Turkish Government might have declined to pay him anything as his Concession had lapsed; nevertheless, in order to come to a friendly settlement, the Turkish Government offered to repay him everything he had spent. He asked if Mr. Hills, according to his Concession of 1901, which he assumed was in force and was now to be confirmed, had the right to go to Mezarib.

Mr. Hills said he had the right to extend east and south, which would include Mezarib, but if he went there it was to suit the convenience of the Turkish Government, whose line to the Hedjaz must pass that point. Mr. Hills strenuously denied that his Concession had lapsed; he had the letter of the late Minister of Public Works: he had shown it to Costaki Anthopoulos Pasha, the Ottoman Ambassador in London, and was by him informed that it was in order; on the faith of that he had spent 70,000*l.* out of his own pocket, and had been allowed to commence his works; the Turkish Government had also accepted his deposit of £T. 10,000.

The Minister said that Mahmoud Djalalledin Pasha, the former Minister, since dead, had no authority to give such a letter, it was a fraud; Mr. Pilling knew very well that an Imperial Iradé was required for such authorization to continue the working of a Concession which had expired, by the fact of the stipulations thereof not having been observed; on two former occasions extension of time had been accorded by Mahmoud Pasha in similar circumstances, but on both occasions an Imperial Iradé had been issued.

Mr. Hills said that in England there was such a thing as Ministerial responsibility, and the Ottoman Government were responsible for the acts of their Minister.

The Minister declined to admit this, and said that if there was any discussion about the terms of the Concessions the matter would be decided by the Council of State. But he said the Turkish Government did not wish to have recourse to law—they desired to satisfy Mr. Hills; even assuming that the rights of Mr. Hills were unassailable, the Turkish Government had a perfect right to buy their Concession back; that was what they were doing with the the French quay Concession. Again, he proposed to Mr. Hills to repay him for his expenses. The Minister asked Mr. Hills how he proposed to get hold of the French line, Damascus to Mezarib, and if Mr. Hills had any arrangement with the French Company.

Mr. Hills replied that he was about to come to an arrangement with the French Company.

He said that his rights were perfectly clear, and if he could not get justice from the Turkish Government, as he had fondly expected, there was nothing more to do but to appeal to his own Government, and he would warn the Minister that his Government upheld his view, and that not only did the Turkish Government expose themselves to pressure from the British Government, but also from the French and German Governments, the Ambassador of the latter having stated to him that this breach of faith on the part of the Turkish Government would imperil the development of the German Colony at Haifia.

The Minister expressed surprise at possible French or German intervention, and asked me if I gave that statement as Mr. Hills' or my own; I replied that throughout the conversation I acted as interpreter, and took no responsibility for what Mr. Hills said.

The Minister said he would report Mr. Hills' refusal to accept the Sultan's proposals and await instructions. He would let Mr. Hills know if there was anything further to communicate to him.

I then on my behalf said to the Minister that I desired to point out to him that the proposal made to-day differed somewhat from the proposals hitherto made by the Sultan through the First Secretary, the Foreign Minister, and directly to your Excellency.

The present proposal was, "that the Turkish Government intended to build the line itself, and if the work was given out to a contractor it would be given to Mr. Hills, who would also be indemnified for his expenses hereto."

The Sultan had instructed the First Secretary and the Foreign Minister to tell me that he would buy out Mr. Hills and give him the construction of the line for the account of the Turkish Government, and also that he would give him the construction of the line at present in French hands, from Rineh to Aleppo; His Majesty had also promised to give Mr. Hills the construction of the Hedjaz line; he had even said he would use Mr. Hills' engineer and staff.

The Minister said he had no knowledge of this; but Mr. Hills absolutely declined to listen to any proposal to be bought out, and insisted on the confirmation of the Concession of 1891; there was nothing to be gained by raising fresh discussion as to the details of the proposals made by the Government.

(Signed) ADAM BLOCK.

May 15, 1901.

The Shammars, who appear to have been actuated by a desire to take no steps in opposition to the Government, sent a message to Azamet Pasha reproaching him with his action in assisting robbers against their tribe, and they at the same time sent word to their Sheikh at Deir Zor, who telegraphed thence both to the Mushir at Erzingen and to the Central Government a complaint against Azamet Pasha; and I am now informed that the Shammars, seeing the evident design of the Government to support the cause of Ibrahim Pasha, have invoked the aid of the Anezi, Asi, and other Arab tribes.

With the view of meeting the threatened danger of a combination of the Arab tribes hostile to the Government, the Mushir of the 4th Army Corps has issued orders for the dispatch of further contingents to the disturbed district, where the number of troops belonging to that corps is to be brought up to twelve battalions.

I have the honour to add that on Sunday, the 12th instant, two companies of cavalry sent from Mush left this city for Nisibin, which, it is feared, may be attacked by the Shammars.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

No. 31.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received June* 10.)

(No. 210.) *Constantinople, May* 29, 1901.

My Lord,

WITH the view of gauging the general condition of affairs in the provinces I have instructed His Majesty's Consular officers to furnish me with a quarterly Report on the economic and administrative condition of their districts.

The present one from Mr. Barnham, His Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, is, as usual, carefully prepared, and as it contains information which unfortunately in its general tenour corresponds closely to the accounts from other districts (see my despatches Nos. 184, 188, and 200 of the 12th, 14th, and 29th instant, respectively) I venture to trouble your Lordship with a copy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 31.

General Report upon the Vilayet of Aleppo.

Agriculture.—I do not remember a season more fraught with anxiety to the farming class.

To secure an average harvest the cultivator looks for heavy and continuous rain from the new year, and for plentiful showers a month later. This year he has been sadly disappointed. A little rain fell in early January, but was succeeded by ten weeks of drought, and this was aggravated by a wave of heat which passed over the country in March, caused by Khamseen winds, which burnt up and blighted everything in their path. In some places which were not thus affected by Khamseen, the corn shot up to its full growth, but it was found, on close inspection, that it was worthless and left as fodder for cattle. In the Sanjjak of Ourfa locusts made their appearance last year, and the farmers, anticipating a similar invasion this year, had sown very little.

A few weeks ago the country along the banks of the Euphrates, at Roumkaleh, Biredjik, and as far as Deyr Zor, was swarming with young locusts, hatched from eggs deposited last year, and the people of those towns and the surrounding villages, under compulsion from the Government, were out in the desert collecting and destroying them.

Such adverse circumstances would lead one to suppose that the harvest had completely failed, but it happens that in this part of the vilayet much more seed

was sown than usual, and that in some districts where irrigation is possible, as in the Valley of the Orontes, abundant crops have been raised, with the net result that the vilayet is saved from anything like disaster, though the price of bread will certainly rise.

Public Security.—In a letter received some time ago from Ourfa a missionary doctor writes that outside the towns that region is in a state of anarchy, that the Hamidié Kurds from an *imperium in imperio*, that Ibrahim Pasha of Verenishehir, their Chief, administers a little empire of his own, which reaches to within an hour or two of the city of Ourfa. The civil authorities have no authority over the Hamidié, can neither collect taxes from them, nor bring them before any of the Courts of Law. The same remark applies to the Shammar Arabs, who are equally mobile and difficult to approach, and now we hear that these two forces of disorder are at open war, that Ibrahim Pasha has appealed to the Porte, and that troops are being sent from various centres into the Vilayet of Diarbekir to preserve the peace.

A battalion of mounted infantry left Aleppo last week for that purpose, commanded by Mehmet Bey, son-in-law of Ferik Ali Mohsin Pasha.

In the region of Haran, in the district of Ourfa, nearly one-half of the villages are deserted, and the condition of the peasants is deplorable.

On this side of the Euphrates the country is quiet, though the caravan routes are not quite safe, for a petty form of brigandage always exists, and little is done to put a stop to it. I must, however, mention that a notorious brigand from Jebel Moussa, in the Suedia district, named Jebra, was recently captured and killed, and this was made the occasion of a demonstration in favour of Enis Pasha. Rifaat Agha, the leading Moslem proprietor, compelled the heads of communities to draw up a Mazbata, expressing their gratitude to Enis Pasha, which was sent to Constantinople, and a copy to each of the Consuls.

Revenue from Taxation.—The official budget of the vilayet for the two financial years ended the 31st March, 1901, was as follows:—

	Verghu, or Land Tax.	Tithes.	Sheep and Camel Tax.	Military Exemption Tax.	Miscellaneous.	Total
	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£. T.
1900	109,022	134,003	105,063	19,030	34,853	403,471
1901	112,434	172,850	76,000	20,805	26,345	408,434

These taxes are nominally devoted to defraying the cost of administration, but a large amount was sent to Constantinople to pay arrears of the war indemnity and for other purposes, and the balance was insufficient to meet the charge for salaries, which, to a great extent, remain unpaid.

Police.—The police force for the entire vilayet musters 40 officers and men, of whom one only is a Christian.

Gendarmerie.—The gendarmerie force comprises 87 officers, 669 mounted, and 650 foot zaptiehs (all Moslem).

Law Courts.—In the Civil Court of First Instance 425 cases were heard during the past year, of which 125 were claims for non-payment of taxes.

In the Civil Appeal Court large arrears of cases were heard which had stood over from the previous year, the total number being 1,021. This seems very improbable, but it is an official statement, and its explanation appears to be that on account of an outbreak of typhoid, it was necessary to hasten the gaol delivery. The President of the Appeal Court is intelligent and energetic.

In the Criminal Court of First Instance 287 cases were heard, in the Appeal Court 582, and in the Tidjaret (Commercial Court) 315 cases.

Public Works.—There is little to report under the head of Public Works. All road-making has ceased, and no repairs are attempted except at Aleppo itself. The work of draining the marshes at Alexandretta continues, but at the present rate of progress it will take ten years to complete it.

Aleppo, May 13, 1901.

No. 32[a].

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received June* 10.)

(No. 218.) *Therapia, June* 4, 1901.

My Lord,

I HAD the honour, in my telegram No. 61 of the 30th ultimo, to report to your Lordship that the Council of Ministers had, upon an Iradé from the Sultan, approved the contract for a cruiser which had been signed on the 28th ultimo by the Minister of Marine and the agents of Messrs. Armstrong, the contract providing also for the payment of the Armenian indemnities of 63,000*l.* in the first instalment; and your Lordship was good enough to express your satisfaction at the conclusion of these negotiations.

The Turkish press was allowed to report that an order for a cruiser had been given to Messrs. Armstrong and to publish the specifications, &c., of the ship. There seemed to be no doubt that the final Iradé would be issued at once to approve the contract and the decision of the Council of Ministers, both of which had already received the Imperial approbation.

The following day, however, the Minister for Foreign Affairs was instructed to inform one that the Financial Commission reported that they were unable to provide funds to pay for the cruiser, but that His Imperial Majesty would, in order to give me a proof of his goodwill, arrange to deposit at a bank, if necessary from the Privy Purse, a sum equal to the indemnity claims, and that, after examination, these claims would be satisfied.

The next day, 1st June, the Minister for Foreign Affairs called upon me with instructions from the Sultan to endeavour to induce me to accept this proposal. The task seemed to him an unpleasant one, and I certainly did not attempt to make it easier. I reminded his Excellency of the official form of his engagement, how he had been instructed as Minister for Foreign Affairs to inform me that the cruiser would be bought, the indemnities included in the first instalment and Mr. Hills contented in regard to the Haifa–Damascus Railway. I further reminded him that when the Minister of Marine asked me on the 27th ultimo for some delay in order to arrange modifications in the Contract so as to include the indemnities, I had only consented to wait till the 30th upon receiving an official note from his Excellency recording the arrangement, and I impressed upon his Excellency that any breach of faith at this hour would give His Majesty's Government ground for very serious complaint and would be a grave matter.

I inclose to your Lordship herewith a copy of the note to which I have just referred.

Tewfik Pasha said he would immediately report what I said to the Sultan, and, leaving me about noon, he returned at 2·30, saying he had done all he could to persuade His Imperial Majesty not to raise further difficulties; but that he had been ordered to see me again, and was puzzled what more to say. I said I would relieve him of this difficulty by declining to discuss the matter, and simply request him to report to the Sultan that I absolutely declined to admit any alterations, and held the Ottoman Government to their official engagement. He could, moreover, tell the Sultan that the matter was out of my hands; that, as in duty bound, I had reported to your Lordship the promises conveyed to me through the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the most formal and definite manner, and that I refused to cover myself with shame by reporting the ridiculous proposals made.

Upon inquiring of Tewfik Pasha confidentially the reasons of the Sultan's change of attitude and attempt to evade his engagement, his Excellency said that he could only attribute it to the representations made to the Sultan on Thursday by the French Ambassador. His Excellency said he would tell me, confidentially, that M. Constans had told the Sultan that if he ordered a cruiser in England he must also order one in France, and that, in order to escape the Ambassador's importunities, he had dropped a remark to the effect that he would not order a cruiser in England, and had set up the objections of the Financial Commission on the ground of his new proposal merely to pay the indemnities.

Upon the First Dragoman stating that Messrs. Armstrong's agent had seen the Financial Commissioners and had learnt from them that there was no difficulty in making provision for the payment if the Sultan wished it, the Minister said that he was only repeating the instructions given to him at the Palace by the Sultan's First Secretary.

Late in the night the Minister for Foreign Affairs summoned Mr. Block and told him that the Sultan now desired certain modifications in the terms of payment, for which he requested my acceptance. I replied that these were details that did not concern me, but that I would make no objection, provided Messrs. Armstrong's agent agreed. Mr. Block

was at the same time given to understand that if this was agreed to the matter would be finally settled without delay.

The negotiations continued throughout the two following days of the 2nd and 3rd, the Minister for Foreign Affairs or Mr. Block being sent for at all hours to the Palace and kept waiting an unconscionable time before receiving the Sultan's message. One of these messages was to the effect that I should undertake in writing that the cruiser Contract would be properly executed, and that Mr. Hills would accept compensation for his expenditure, preserving preferential rights to the construction of the railway, but renouncing his original Concession. I told the Minister that I could only regard this proposal as a joke, as otherwise it would be an attempt to turn the British Ambassador into a commercial agent, a proceeding which I should resent very seriously, even though coming from the Palace. I said Mr. Block had very properly declined to submit the paper to me, and I was glad to see his Excellency had no desire to do so.

I do not think we need attach any great importance to the repeated subterfuges and attempts to evade the formal engagement taken by the Government. Happily, the provisional Contract was signed on an Iradé from the Sultan, and on the same high authority approved by the Council of Ministers, and to this agreement the Ottoman Government will be held, whatever delay, which I hope may not be long, there may be before the final Iradé is issued.

I was interrupted at this point by the visit of Saïd Pasha, the President of the Council of State, and by Ibrahim Bey, the Grand Master of Ceremonies, who came by order of the Sultan to try to persuade me to give an undertaking that Mr. Hills would be satisfied with compensation for his expenses, and would not insist either on the construction of the line or the original Concession. This demand was covered by a request that I would state in writing that the Contract for the ship would be properly executed.

I rejected, I am afraid, with considerable warmth the proposals. I refused, I said, to believe that His Majesty the Sultan had given Saïd Pasha any such mission, and asked whether they had come to give me the attributions of a commercial agent rather than of an Ambassador; whether similar proposals had been made to the German and Italian Ambassadors when ships had been sent for repairs to Kiel or Genoa, and I insisted on the President taking back his proposal or leaving my room without another word. Saïd Pasha, who had been for years Minister for Foreign Affairs, withdrew his words, and was fervent in his declarations of respect both for His Majesty's Representative and His Majesty's Government.

I took advantage of the opportunity given by these unseemly proposals to decline any discussion of the Haifa Railway until the questions of the cruiser, and the indemnities were settled, and I demanded an answer from the Minister for Foreign Affairs either to-night or to-morrow.

I will, however, endeavour to give Mr. Hills what support I properly can when he returns from Syria.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 32.

Tewfik Pasha to Sir N. O'Conor.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Sublime Porte, le 27 Mai*, 1901.

ME référant à notre entretien de ce soir j'ai l'honneur d'informer votre Excellence sur l'avis que j'ai reçu à l'instant de la part du Ministère de la Marine, que le retard mis à la signature du Contrat des bateaux à commander en Angleterre provient du non-aplanissement de certaines difficultés techniques concernant le choix du modèle de ce bateau. Donc le bateau à commander devra être un croiseur dont les trois modèles seront dès demain présentés par son Excellence Hassan Pacha à Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan. Dans le cas où Sa Majesté Impériale choisirait le modèle présenté par MM. Armstrong, le Contrat en sera aussitôt signé et soumis au Conseil des Ministres de Mercredi prochain. Si par contre l'un des deux modèles préparés par l'Amirauté Impériale était choisi par Sa Majesté Impériale le Contrat serait signé le lendemain Jeudi et soumis au Conseil des Ministres de Dimanche. Il est bien entendu que la somme revenant à l'Ambassade sera incluse dans le premier versement de la commande.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) TEWFIK.

No. 32.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received June 10.*)

(No. 216.) *Therapia, June 4*, 1901.

My Lord,

YOUR Lordship is aware of the representations which I made to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on learning by telegraph from the Consular Agent at Mossul that the Christians of the Tiari district were threatened with an attack from Kurds from the Province of Mossul.

I have now the honour to report that the appointment of a new Vali of Mossul, Nazim Bey, was gazetted yesterday. I am informed that this is a very satisfactory appointment, Nazim Bey being highly spoken of as an honest and capable man. He is young, and has risen rapidly in the public service under the protection of Said Pasha, President of the Council of State, in which he has lately filled the post of Procureur-General of the Court of Cassation. He has, I understand, acquitted himself with credit and to the entire satisfaction of the Government in more than one delicate mission.

He is of Kurdish origin, but speaks French and Greek as well as Turkish.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 33.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received June 17.*)

(No. 222.) *Constantinople, June 9*, 1901.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 26 of the 25th April, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of three Reports from the British Consular Agent at Mosul, reporting on the recent threatened attack by Kurds on the Christians of the Tiari Mountains, and on the measures taken to preserve public order.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 33.

Mr. Rassam to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 7.) *Mosul, April 9*, 1901.
(Purport.)

I HAVE the honour to report the arrival here of Lutfi Effendi, formerly President of the Criminal Court, as President of the Appeal Court lately established in the Mosul Vilayet.

A fortnight ago, Reshid Beg, once the Mudir of the Barwarieh district, left, with a band of 110 armed Kurds, for a place on the Khabur River, five hours distant from Karmush, where they looted eight flocks of sheep, numbering 4,000 animals, from some Nestorian Christian shepherds. The shepherds and owners of the sheep, thirteen in number, and three women were killed. These people were the inhabitants of Ashitha, in the Hikariyah district. Reshid Beg then returned with the loot to his village, Dershish.

This attack of Reshid Beg, coupled with the murder of Malik Yousif, son of Malik Pathoo, has greatly incensed the Tiaris. If the authorities do not take notice of this matter and imprison Reshid Beg and recover the property, it is probable that the Tiaris will revenge themselves on Reshid Beg and his followers by attacking the Barwarieh. If this happens, there will be further fighting between them.

Owing to drought for a long time, the crops dried up. Corn was sold at 14 G. S. piastres the wazna, and barley at 7½ G. S. piastres. His Excellency the Wali persuaded the people to offer up prayers, which they readily agreed to do. The Moslems repaired on Monday last to the Mosque of Nabi Yunus, and the Christians and Jews to their places of worship. On the evening of that day God granted them

abundant rain, which poured during nearly the whole night; and, on the following day, prices fell: wheat to 8 G. S. piastres, and barley to 3 G. S. piastres to the great joy of the inhabitants in general and the poor in particular.

Inclosure 2 in No. 33.

Mr. Rassam to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 8.)
(Purport.)

Mosul, April 23, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to report that a fortnight ago Reshid Beg again looted a flock of sheep belonging to the people of Ashitha, while grazing at a place on the River Khaboor, between Barwarieh and Karmush, and killed two men from Tiari.

A messenger arrived yesterday from Amadieh. He reports that Reshid Beg collected a large number of Kurds from the Barwarieh, Amadieh, Doskiyah, and Saghna districts, being encouraged and aided by Sheikh Baha-ud-Din Nakhsbendi, a resident of the village of Bamarni, a suburb of Amadieh. These Kurds left under command of Reshid Beg to plunder and kill the Tiaris. This expedition is said to have been in course of preparation by the Kurds since last winter, and they secretly decided to carry it out in the spring. If the Government take no notice of it the result will be disastrous, and probably lead to the annihilation of the Nestorian Christians living in the Tiari Mountains, especially if that notorious rogue, Sheikh Muhammad Saddik, the son of Sheikh Obeidallah, whose head-quarters are in the district of Shamazdin, in the Vilayet of Van, has also joined the Kurds of Amadieh. There is no doubt that they would surround Tiari on all sides and annihilate the inhabitants. From information received by me, it appears that more than 10,000 fighting men of the Kurds have assembled. In order that measures may be taken to prevent the impending danger, I was obliged to telegraph to his Excellency the Ambassador at Constantinople. A copy of the telegram is sent herewith.

Last week a number of the Christians of the village of Manguish, a suburb of Amadieh, came here and complained to the authorities that the Kurds of the Harkiah tribe had attacked their village, looted their sheep and cattle, and killed three men. Of this raid the Bishop Hannah Sehbar had previous intimation, and twice warned Abdullah Pasha, the Kaïmakam of Amadieh, and requested him to take the necessary protective measures, but the latter paid no attention, and took no steps to prevent it, and the Kurds carried out their project. This behaviour proves the reluctance of the Kaïmakam to protect and safeguard the Christians. Probably he secretly seeks their ruin, as he is in league with Reshid Beg, and, as he (the Kaïmakam) is a base man, he always unjustly exonerates Reshid Beg before the authorities, and ascribes the outrages to the Christians of Tiari.

Inclosure 3 in No. 33.

Mr. Rassam to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Telegraphic.)

Mosul, April 23, 1901.

RESHID BEG, formerly Mudir of Barwarieh, after killing a few days ago fifteen Christians of the Tiari and carrying their sheep, collected last week about 10,000 Kurds, with the help of Baha-ud-Din Sheikh Nakhsbendi, and they went to Tiari Mountains with intention of killing and robbing the Christians. Unless local authorities intervene, Christians in great danger.

Inclosure 4 in No. 33.

Mr. Rassam to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 9.)
(Purport.)

Mosul, April 30, 1901.

WITH reference to my letter No. 8, dated the 23rd instant, I have the honour to inform you that last Wednesday his Excellency the Vali dispatched Husni Pasha, the Commandant of the zaptiehs, with a detachment of more than 120 mule mounted gendarmes, to Amadieh, *en route* to the Barwarieh district. This has been carried out in compliance with strict orders, received by his Excellency from the Sublime Porte, to take proper measures to protect the Christians of Tiari and to prevent the Kurds from

attacking them. I have not yet heard what has happened there, as, owing to the insecurity of the road, no one has come from there. It is said that his Excellency the Vali will also, if necessary, proceed to Tiari, as also his Excellency Tahir Pasha, the Vali of Van.

M. Dorville, the newly-appointed French Consul, arrived here the day before yesterday to succeed M. Sante, who leaves to-morrow for Tripoli, in Syria, to which place he has been transferred.

No. 34.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received June* 17.)

(No. 224.)
My Lord,

Therapia, June 11, 1901.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 152 of the 23rd April reporting the deposition of the Œcumenical Patriarch, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that, as was anticipated, his successor has been found in the person of M. Joachim III, who was unanimously elected by the Electoral Assembly on the 7th instant.

The inclosed extract from the "Levant Herald," of the 8th, gives a good account of the ceremony.*

I think that the antecedents of the new Patriarch lead to the belief that he will not sacrifice the interests of his Church out of complacency to Russia, friendly though that Power has shown herself to him in the past, and that His Holiness will do all in his power to check the spread of Russian propaganda both at Mount Athos and in other parts of the Empire where the Russian Church has been most active in her endeavours to supplant the Greek Orthodox Church.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 35.

Sir E. Egerton to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received June* 20.)

(No. 57.)
My Lord,

Athens, June 14, 1901.

I WAS glad to learn from M. Romanos to-day that the choice at Constantinople of the Patriarch Joachim is generally approved of, as he is a man of eminent qualities. There was a time when he was not in favour in Government circles at Athens, as being rather Œcumenical than merely Hellenic in his view of his duties. A cabal was formed against him, and he felt groundlessly accused of undue complaisance to the Porte and of being under Russian influence.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWIN H. EGERTON.

No. 36.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received June* 24.)

(No. 230.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, June 15, 1901.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 222 of the 7th instant, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch from the British Consular Agent at Mosul, reporting further on the recent threatened attack on the Christians of the Tiari district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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* Not printed.

Inclosure in No. 36.

Purport of Report No. 10, dated the 14th May, 1901, from the British Consular Agent at Mosul.

WITH reference to my previous letter, I have the honour to report that the Kurds did not attack the Christians of Tiari, owing to a number of Kurds deserting Reshid Beg when Abdullah Pasha, the Kaimakam of Amadiah, arrived at Barwariah. His Excellency the Vali of Mosul had warned Abdullah Pasha that if he did not prevent the attack he would be dismissed. On the arrival there of Husni Pasha, Commandant of the Zaptiehs, with his detachment, the rest of the Kurds dispersed. The chief cause of this dispersion is said to have been want of provisions, which Reshid Beg was unable to provide. He distributed them in the villages, which are mostly poor and destitute, of which the inhabitants cannot meet their own wants.

Both Abdullah Pasha and Husni Pasha stayed there in hope of reconciling the two parties. They sent for the Elders of Tiari for this purpose, but they refused compliance, knowing that the Pashas could not obtain satisfaction for the injuries caused by Reshid Beg by murdering their fellow-men and plundering their sheep and property.

(Signed) NIMRUD RASSAM.

No. 37.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 24.)

(No. 236.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, June 18, 1901.*

I NEED not, I think, trouble your Lordship with the multifarious details of the very active negotiations in connection with the Syria Ottoman Railway Company's Concession, which Mr. Hills, who returned here on the 12th instant after inspecting the line, has been carrying on with my assistance since Friday the 14th instant.

It will be well, however, with reference to my despatch No. 234 of the 15th instant, to report the main points and the result of these negotiations up to the present moment.

Mr. Hills attended at the Commission which was sitting at the Palace at 4 o'clock on Friday. It was composed of the Minister of Public Works, the Minister of Marine, and Izzet Bey. Towards 7 o'clock, fearing that Mr. Hills might not be able to interpret matters clearly, I requested Mr. Block to go to Yildiz.

Little or no progress appears to have been made up to this hour, but finally the following proposals and counter-proposals were submitted for consideration. Mr. Hills' proposals were:—

1. To maintain his rights and continue the construction of the line.

2. To construct the line from Haifa to Damascus for the account of the Ottoman Government; the price per kilometre to be fixed on the mean price per kilometre of the three lines—Anatolian, Smyrna–Kassala, and Smyrna–Aidin, making a proportionate reduction from broad to narrow gauge.

3. To accept 200,000*l.* in compensation for his expenditure and vested rights, and 20,000*l.* per annum until the extinction of the capital sum.

The proposal of the Commission was to give Mr. Hills a right of preference over any other contractor for the construction of the line from Haifa to Damascus; to give him an order for 100,000*l.* worth of materials for the Hedjaz Railway, and pay him an indemnity for his expenditure after assessment by a Commission of experts named by both parties.

On the following day the Minister for Foreign Affairs sent for me. He told me he was instructed to continue the negotiations with me. I said that I could not interfere further in the business details, but that I thought the best plan would be to summon Mr. Hills and get him to put down on paper his conditions.

The settlement now seemed to depend upon the amount of compensation to be paid, and as to whether a Commission should estimate the value of the works.

Mr. Hills, on his arrival, began by pointing out that, by the Convention between him and the original concessionnaire of August 1898, the capital, after prolonged negotiations, was reduced to 170,000*l.* The money spent by him, together with interest and profits, was 100,000*l.*, amounting in all to 270,000*l.*

Mr. Hills further said that of the line 8 kilom. were completed and ready for

No. 36*.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received June 24.)

(No. 235. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, June 16, 1901.*

I HAD the honour to inform your Lordship in my telegram No. 62 of the 30th ultimo, that the Contract for a Turkish cruiser, to be built by Messrs. Armstrong was finally signed on that day. The vessel is to be similar to the one ordered some months ago at Messrs. Cramps yards in America, and the contract price is 372,000*l.*

I am glad to be able to state that this total includes a sum of 63,000*l.* for the payment of the indemnities arising out of the Armenian massacres, and that Messrs. Armstrong, for whose courtesy and consideration throughout this complicated negotiation I am much indebted, have been so good as to acknowledge in writing, through their representative, Mr. Falkner, that this sum of 63,000*l.* constitutes a first charge on their receipts from the Turkish Government.

It had at first been arranged that a first instalment of 120,000*l.* should be paid to Messrs. Armstrong in the month of October next, out of which the whole of the 63,000*l.* should be retained by His Majesty's Embassy for the satisfaction of the claims. But the scheme of instalments as finally accepted is as follows: 31,000*l.* on the 6th January, 1902; 31,000*l.* two months later, and so on in equal instalments payable every second month until completion.

If the first two instalments amounting to 62,000*l.* were paid over *in toto* to His Majesty's Embassy, Messrs. Armstrong would receive no payment enabling them to begin construction until the autumn of this year, and Mr. Falkner has therefore requested me, without derogation from our first claim on the money, to consent, if possible, to an arrangement by which we should receive 20,000*l.* out of each of the first two instalments and 23,000*l.* out of the third, the remainder of these three instalments going to Messrs. Armstrong.

In a later communication he expresses the hope that the sums to be received by His Majesty's Embassy may be allowed to extend over a still longer period, and in support of this request he points out that, in order to be able to deliver the vessels within the twenty-two months laid down in the Contract, the work of construction must be begun at once and proceeded with vigorously, involving an immediate heavy expenditure on labour, material, engines, &c.

Against this outlay it is right, he adds, that Messrs. Armstrong should have some cash in hand, for otherwise, on any default of payment, they would be left in possession of a great deal of material that would be perfectly valueless.

I admit the weight of this argument, and I venture to hope that I may be authorized to waive my right to receive the whole of the first two instalments, and to accept as circumstances dictate, either of the arrangements to which Mr. Falkner has agreed.

The indemnity money should, I think, be paid by Messrs. Armstrong, as it accrues into the Imperial Ottoman Bank, to my order, but I should not propose to commence paying it *pro ratâ* to the claimants until some two-thirds of the total sum has been so paid in.

I notice that, in spite of my endeavours to keep the matter secret, the arrangement concerning the indemnities has found its way into the papers. I still hope, however, that a discussion of the matter in Parliament may be avoided.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

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traffic. The value per kilom. was 7,000*l.*, equal to 56,000*l.*; 49 kilom. were prepared for laying of rails and embanked and bridged, which, estimated at 4,000*l.* per kilom., amounted to 196,000*l.*, making a total of 252,000*l.* He thus claimed to show by two different calculations the value he was entitled to set upon his line.

Nevertheless, he now agreed to sell for 200,000*l.*, on payment of which the Ottoman Government would enter into possession. But in order to still further facilitate matters for them he was ready to accept 30,000*l.* down for the two years during which the works had been stopped, and the remainder of the 200,000*l.* with interest at 5 per cent., in yearly instalments of 20,000*l.* Preferential rights existing in the Convention of 1901 were to be maintained in the event of the Ottoman Government not undertaking the construction of the works indicated.

The deposit in the Ottoman Bank is to be returned to Mr. Hills, 10,000*l.*, and the sum of 3,000*l.* annually is to be paid to the Company by the Ottoman Government for the maintenance of the existing works until the complete extinction of the debt. Mr. Hills at the same time took note of the engagement given by the Ottoman Government as to the purchase of materials for the Hedjaz Railway from him.

Tewfik Pasha said that he would submit Mr. Hills' statement to the Sultan without delay, and that he hoped to be able to give me an answer the next day.

On Sunday afternoon, the 16th instant, I received another message from Tewfik Pasha saying he desired to see me as soon as possible. I called upon his Excellency at 6·30 P.M. and found him greatly disturbed by the instructions he had received from Yildiz. He said, showing me a scrap of paper from the Sultan's First Secretary, that he had received an Iradé from His Majesty to settle the question with me, but without giving him any precise instructions. He believed this was a Palace intrigue to throw the responsibility on him, and that he would be blamed whatever course he took. The First Secretary was fully aware of Mr. Hills' terms, but he cunningly refused to tell him whether to accept or refuse them. His Excellency said he was consequently unable to make any proposals other than those which had already been submitted by the Commission, and that he was puzzled what to do.

I replied that under these circumstances I thought it useless to discuss the matter further, and that probably the best plan would be for me to read his Excellency the written instructions which I had that morning given Mr. Block.

Tewfik Pasha eagerly jumped at this solution of the difficulty, and asking for a French translation, *séance tenante*, dispatched it by express to the Palace.

Towards noon on Monday I was again in communication with the Foreign Minister. I received an urgent note from him, informing me that the Commission was again in session at Yildiz and that the presence of Mr. Hills was indispensable. He begged me to ask Mr. Hills to go to the Palace and defer his departure till next day.

I saw Mr. Hills; but he declined, on the ground of pressing engagements in England, and he left Constantinople that afternoon.

I received this morning a letter from Mr. Hills' agent, Mr. Foord, of which I have the honour to inclose a copy, transmitting the *procès-verbal* of the meeting at the Palace. It would appear that they no longer insisted upon the examination of the works by an expert, and that the only remaining difficulty lay in the amount of the compensation.

In these circumstances, it is much to be regretted that Mr. Hills did not defer his departure. Had he done so, I think there would have been a fair prospect of an amicable settlement of the question, which may now drag on for some time.

It is my opinion that Mr. Hills is fully justified in asking for more than the mere money expended; that a claim for his concessionary rights, such as they are, is reasonable and legitimate, and that he has shown a conciliatory spirit in reducing the amount claimed from 300,000*l.* to 200,000*l.*

Had Mr. Hills' claim to the Concession been unimpeachable, and had it been confirmed by Imperial Iradé, I think His Majesty's Government would have been justified in upholding it or insisting upon a settlement on very generous terms; but when we remember that the Haidar Pasha Railway Concession, after many years of diplomatic negotiation and with an undisputed title, was settled finally by a money payment of 130,000*l.*, I do not think that Mr. Hills can—at all events, from a business point of view—complain if he receives 200,000*l.* for a Concession, the title of which is disputed, and with some show of reason, by the autocratic Sovereign of the country, and of which, under any circumstances, the intrinsic value is very problematical.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 37.

Sir N. O'Conor to Mr. Block.

Prinkipo, June 16, 1901.

YOU should remind the First Secretary that His Imperial Majesty the Sultan gave me himself, and through his Minister for Foreign Affairs, the following assurances:—

1. To give Mr. Hills the construction of the line "pour compte du Gouvernement Ottoman."
2. To give him large orders of materials for the Hedjaz Railway.
3. To content Mr. Hills if he returned.
4. To compensate him for his expenditure.
5. To secure Mr. Hills preferential right of construction in case the line was not given to him to construct at present.

Mr. Hills does not wish to part with his Concession, and he has consented to do so only on the assurances given by the Sultan. His demands seem to me extremely reasonable, conciliatory, and moderate. In face of the fact that a careful inspection of the line was made by the Minister of Public Works only a few months ago, I can only regard the present proposal to send a Commission to examine them as an attempt to delay a settlement. The Sultan's promise to content Mr. Hills was absolute.

I have done all in my power to bring about an agreement, which, if not satisfactory to Mr. Hills, must certainly be regarded as such by His Imperial Majesty, and if Mr. Hills' present proposal is refused I can do no more.

It may be well, however, to make this clearly understood at the Palace. If the matter is not settled before Mr. Hills leaves to-morrow, his late proposals naturally fall to the ground, and he will make arrangements for the continuance of the works, as entitled by Mahmoud Jelaleddin's Concession, the acceptance of caution-money, &c., and claim the support of His Majesty's Government against improper interference with his vested rights. The Imperial Government may take it for granted that when this course has been taken the terms now still possible will no longer be acceptable.

If the Ottoman Government do not come to an amicable arrangement to-day they will learn in time, and with regret, when it is too late, that my advice was prompted by friendly feelings towards His Imperial Majesty and the Ottoman Empire.

You can read this to the First Secretary, and let him take note of its substance.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

(A French translation of the above instruction was handed to Tewfik Pasha at 8 P.M. by order of the Ambassador, and the Minister presented it to the Palace later in the evening.)

N. R. O'C.

Inclosure 2 in No. 37.

Mr. Foord to Sir N. O'Conor.

Your Excellency, *Pera Palace Hotel, June 17, 1901.*

I WAS at the Palace for three hours this afternoon, but I am afraid the matter still rests in its former position.

Izzet Bey told me categorically that the Sultan would not give us or any other foreigners any rights or privileges in connection with the Haifa–Damascus Railway, but that he would pay us for what we had spent, and would give us something more by way of "gratification."

They did not press this time for a valuation of the line by experts, but said they would accept our figures, and asked me to obtain some details.

I gave them some information which is included in the second Minute, a copy of which I left at the Palace; but I was careful not to commit myself in the way of figures.

I am writing to-night to Mr. Hills to ask him to prepare a statement and send it out to me, although I fancy that this is merely advice to gain time.

No. 37 A.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 154. Confidential.) *Foreign Office, July 4, 1901.*

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 235, Confidential, of the 16th ultimo, regarding the time and manner in which the indemnities arising out of the Armenian massacres shall be paid to your Excellency by Messrs. Armstrong.

The procedure proposed in the above-mentioned despatch has the approved of His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 37 B.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 155.) *Foreign Office, July 4, 1901.*

Sir,

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 236 of the 18th ultimo, reporting the course of the negotiations which have been carried on by Mr. Hills, with your assistance, in connection with the Concession of the Syria Ottoman Railway Company.

I approve your Excellency's proceedings in the matter.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

I should be glad if you could see me within the next day or two, as I am sure that nothing but force can get us out of this *impasse*, though I believe that a way might be found if Mr. Hills could be induced to accept it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. J. FOORD.

Inclosure 3 in No. 37.

Minute of Meeting at the Imperial Palace.

Present:

Their Excellencies the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Public Works, Tahsin Bey and Izzet Bey, Mr. Ramsay, and Mr. Foord.

ASKED what was included in the price of 200,000*l.* asked by Mr. Hills, Mr. Foord stated that the 8 kilom. of finished line, he understood, had been contracted for at 40,000*l.*

Forty-nine kilom., including land, bridges, &c., but not completely finished, 70,000*l.* (included in this were all the tools and materials used in the construction of the line and remaining in the Company's stores at Haiffa).

There were in London 80,000 sleepers, a steam crane, waggons, and stone-crushers which have been waiting for over two years; but he could not say whether they were included in the sum of 200,000*l.* or not.

The interest on the money which has been locked up in the works since they started, and, in addition, the cost of keeping the line in good condition, and of watchmen, during nearly two years (say, 3,000*l.* a-year).

Mr. Foord stated that he could not give the expenses which had been incurred in London.

Messrs. Foord and Ramsay were asked to write to London to find out about the sleepers and other material, and generally to obtain details of the sum asked.

No. 38.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 8.)

(No. 239 A. Confidential.)

Therapia, June 25, 1901.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Lordship that I was informed some time ago that one of the results of M. Delcassé's late visit to St. Petersburgh was that M. de Witte undertook not to oppose the Bagdad Railway scheme, in which a French Syndicate is interested to the extent of 40 per cent., provided the loan which he desired to raise in Paris received the support of the French Government.

This report is confirmed by the French Ambassador, M. Constans, who informs me that the German and French Syndicates have respectively agreed to give Russian capitalists 10 per cent. of the holdings in case they wish to take part in the enterprise.

I am further informed that at a meeting of the 23rd April at Berlin the terms of the draft Convention to be submitted to the Imperial Ottoman Government were discussed, and I hope at an early date to be able to send to your Lordship, confidentially, the *procès-verbal* of this meeting.

Your Lordship is aware that by an additional clause or annex to the Berlin Convention of May 1899, Dr. Von Siemens stipulated that a share should be preserved for British investors, and that the only reason why the exact amount was not fixed was due to their wishes not being known.

Since then no action, so far as I can learn, has been taken in London, and I am afraid that without some impulsion from official quarters British capitalists may not be disposed to move in the matter. Mr. Babington Smith has, at my suggestion, again written to Mr. Clinton Dawkins on the subject, but I have not heard with what result.

In venturing to allude to this question it is not my object to say anything, even if I could properly do so, to lead the large class of British investors to put their money blindly into this work, be its future prospects what they may, but merely to urge as strongly as

I can, that a British Syndicate should be formed to enter into negotiations with the German and French groups and to inquire for themselves into the merits and details of the scheme, so as to be in a position to obtain for the British public, as well as for British trade and commerce, such advantages as may be reaped by those who participate in the original Concession.

I believe the Ottoman Government to be pledged in principle to a kilometrical guarantee. I also believe that without such guarantee it will not be possible to raise a loan, calculated, roughly, at 20,000,000 fr. for the construction of the railway, and that with such guarantee investors run very little risk of losing their money. It is intended both by the Ottoman Government and the Anatolian Railway Company, that a part at least of this guarantee shall be derived from the increased customs duties consequent on the new Treaties of Commerce.

This fact alone and apart from the broader political and commercial considerations involved in the question, seems a reason for British co-operation. The burthen of the new customs duties falls on British imports inasmuch as they exceed those of other countries; and although we may not like to see a large portion of these duties appropriated to a railway guarantee, I believe it would be very difficult, standing alone as we probably should, to oppose or to question the rights of the Turkish Government to apply this revenue to such purpose as it thinks most conducive to the economic development of the country.

There was a time when we might, perhaps, have done so, had we come to an understanding with Russia to oppose any increase of the present customs duties, but we would have started from different points of view, the one antagonistic to any improvement in the economic condition of the country; the other interested in its development and material prosperity, and probably disagreed in the end.

It is unpleasant to contemplate the construction of a railway traversing the whole of Asia Minor and terminating in the Persian Gulf, in which Great Britain takes no part or share.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 39.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 8.)

(No. 244.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 1, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 38 of the 29th January last, I have the honour to transmit herewith an extract from the "Moniteur Oriental" of the 28th June, stating that the Secretary of the Turkish Consulate at Bombay has organized a Committee to collect funds at Peshawar for the construction of the Damascus–Mecca Railway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 39.

Extract from the "Oriental Advertiser" of June 28, 1901.

DAMASCUS MECCA RAILWAY.

MR. COOLIE MAHMUD, formerly of Natal, now Secretary at the Ottoman Consulate, Bombay, has organized a Committee to collect funds at Peshawar for the above railway. Sheikh Jalalodien, the Chairman of the Unjummie Islam, Peshawar, gave 7,000 rupees. It is expected that about 3,000*l.* will be raised in this part of India alone.

No. 40.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 8.)

(No. 246. Confidential.) *Therapia, July 2, 1901.*
My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 239 A of the 25th ultimo, I have now the honour to inclose herewith, to your Lordship, a copy of the Report of the meeting of the German and French Syndicates, which was held at Berlin on the 23rd April respecting the Bagdad Railway.

Your Lordship will observe that the route and terminal stations, as described in Articles I and XXIII of the Convention, were approved by the meeting.

I have not been able to obtain a copy of the Convention, but from the Report of the Commission, of which a précis was sent to your Lordship in my despatches No. 231 of the 3rd and No. 238 of the 10th July last, it may be presumed that Koweit is the proposed terminal station on the Persian Gulf.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 40.

Procès-verbal of the Meeting of the French and German Syndicates, held at Berlin, April 23, 1901.

Assistaient:

LES Représentants du groupe Allemand: MM. le Dr. Siemens et Ed. Huguenin.

Les Représentants du groupe Français: MM. F. Auboyneau, le Comte G. Vitalis, et Noël Bardac.

M. le Dr. Siemens expose l'objet de la réunion et met à l'examen les projets des actes de Concession de la future ligne de Bagdad, qui devront être soumis incessamment au Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman.

Lecture est donnée de ces projets, qui sont acceptés à l'unanimité sous le bénéfice des remarques suivantes:—

Il est constaté que ces projets ne constituent que des instruments de négociations représentant l'ensemble des desiderata à formuler vis-à-vis du Gouvernement Ottoman, tous pouvoirs étant donnés aux négociateurs d'y introduire les modifications nécessaires suivant les besoins des négociations et conformément aux principes arrêtés ci-après:—

1. On envisage la formation d'une Société spéciale; il est reconnu que dans la situation actuelle de l'affaire et étant donné les termes des concessions de principe (Contrat du 11 (23) Décembre, 1899) la question ne saurait actuellement être engagée vis-à-vis du Gouvernement Ottoman autrement qu'elle ne l'est par l'Article 8, alinéas 3 et 4, l'intention des parties demeurant de tirer de l'Administration Spéciale la formation d'une nouvelle Société.

2. On examine ensuite les questions relatives à la garantie et il est décidé de la présenter avec un chiffre invariable de 4,500 fr. pour les frais d'exploitation. Le chiffre relatif au capital de premier établissement sera présenté à 13,500 fr. et ramené à 11,000 fr. dans le cas où le Gouvernement Ottoman consentirait à la formule des titres d'état.

Il résulte des explications échangées qu'à raison de l'importance de l'affaire et de la durée exceptionnelle de l'exécution, autant dans l'intérêt du Gouvernement Ottoman lui-même que des participants, il est tout à fait à désirer que l'on aboutisse en définitive à une formule basée sur l'émission de titres d'état.

La garantie à réclamer du Gouvernement Ottoman consisterait en affectations dont la nature et le chiffre seront fixés d'accord avec le dit Gouvernement et à compléter par l'excédent des revenus douaniers, devant résulter de l'application des nouveaux Traités de Commerce, sous réserve, bien entendu, d'un accord à intervenir entre le Gouvernement Ottoman et l'Administration de la Dette Ottomane.

Le texte de l'Article 35, est redigé en conséquence comme ci-annexé:—

3. Les parties examinent quelles seront leurs sauvegardes dans le cas où, la Convention étant conclue, le Gouvernement Ottoman ne s'occuperait pas suffisamment de l'établissement des garanties, ou bien si la situation des marchés venait à ne pas permettre aux concessionnaires de se procurer les capitaux nécessaires.

On décide de modifier en conséquence l'Article 41 et de compléter l'Article 4 en précisant que parmi les cas de force majeure, entraînant une prolongation des délais d'exécution imposés aux concessionnaires, doivent être compris aussi les cas de guerre Européenne ou Coloniale et le fait que la rente (Anglaise, Allemande, ou Française) baisserait de trois points au-dessous des cours cotés à la date de la signature de la Convention par les concessionnaires.

4. Le tracé général et ses débouchés tels qu'ils sont définis aux Articles 1 et 23 sont adoptés.

5. Le programme d'exécution, tel qu'il se déduit de l'Article 11, rencontre l'assentiment général, car il permet l'attaque des travaux sur tous les points utiles, comme aussi l'exécution de réseaux partiels provisoires, déterminés suivant l'importance des garanties et des capitaux réalisables en conséquence.

6. Les intéressés ayant reconnu que les compensations demandées du chef de l'exécution sur les lignes existantes des travaux supplémentaires, destinés à faciliter la marche de trains rapides, peuvent être présentées au Gouvernement Ottoman sous la forme d'une simple annuité de 1,000,000 fr. environ, et l'Article 36 sera modifié en conséquence.

7. On décide la suppression du deuxième alinéa de l'Article 25.

8. En ce qui concerne la ligne Mersine–Adana, les parties envisagent son rachat éventuel, et pouvoirs sont donnés aux négociations de prendre une option sur cette ligne sur la base ci-jointe.

9. La mention relative au prolongement Diner–Tchai (Article 38) est supprimée.

10. Les Articles 3 et 4 sont complétés comme suit :—

Les sections pour la présentation des plans sont fixées à 200 kilom. La présentation des premiers plans se fera dix-huit mois après remise du Firman, et les autres projets suivront successivement à raison de huit mois pour chaque 200 kilom. Les travaux seront attaqués dans un délai de trois mois à partir de la date de l'approbation des plans des premiers 200 kilom., et il devront être terminés dans un délai de douze ans, chiffre qui pourra être abaissé à dix ans, si besoin.

11. Il est pris note que l'embranchement de Ourfa (environ 30 kilom.) sera soumis à un régime spécial par rapport aux garanties.

12. Le dernier alinéa de l'Article 19 est interprété en ce sens que par "Société d'Anatolie" on entendra l'Administration spéciale.

13. L'Article 42 est supprimé comme étant sans objet par suite de la formule garantie adoptée.

(Signé) DR. G. VON SIEMENS.
ED. HUGUENIN.
F. AUBOYNEAU.
Comte G. VITALIS.
N. BARDAC.

No. 41.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 8.)

(No. 250.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 2, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose, herewith, to your Lordship three despatches reporting on the visit which I authorized Mr. Satow to make to Bitlis, Moush, &c.

The account he gives of the condition of affairs in these districts is lamentable, and I am unofficially communicating the substance of these reports to the Minister of the Interior and drawing his Excellency's serious attention to the changes to which the Christian inhabitants are exposed by the want of firmness and precaution on the part of the local officials.

I am enquiring of Captain Anderson whether the United States' Consul at Sivas has returned to his post from leave of absence, and if I receive an affirmative answer I shall consider the advisability of proposing to your Lordship to transfer Captain Anderson to Bitlis in case he has completed the topographical studies which he was making for the Intelligence Department.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 41.

Vice-Consul Satow to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 12.) *Van, June 8, 1901.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency the following information received subsequent to my despatch No. 11 of the 27th ultimo, which puts a much graver complexion on the recent panics at Bitlis.

About two months ago a report was circulated among the inhabitants by the Mufti that orders had been received for a massacre of the Christians. He said that he had this information on the authority of the military Commandant, who is, however, quite innocent in this respect. The Kurds began to prepare themselves and the Armenians were in a state of terror. The time fixed was stated to be a Friday, after noon-day prayer, as the last massacre began at that time. Two Fridays passed, the shops being shut on those days. Then the Vali summoned the chief Armenians and Kurds and exhorted the former to confidence and the latter to remain quiet, as nothing would happen. He also telegraphed a brief account to Constantinople, making light of the affair. He has, however, knowledge of the plot and its originators, but has done nothing, although papers which prove their guilt are in his hands. Those concerned are: Firstly, the Mufti, a most fanatical man, who held the position at the time of the massacres after which he was exiled. His successor having recently died, he has been reappointed. Secondly, Khalil Effendi who has a very chequered past. He was employed in Sassun under a former Vali, Tahsin Pasha, when he was guilty of much oppression. The Vali, although he must have been aware of this fact appointed him four months ago acting Kaïmakam of Khijan in place of Asaph Bey now in prison. He was, however, obliged to remove him, openly admitting that if he had stayed longer he would have ruined the Caza. His *modus operandi* was to summon the richest Armenians of the district to whom he showed a green envelope which he averred contained orders for a massacre. Having thus reduced them to a state of terror he sent some one to arrange terms for protecting them and saving their lives. This villainy was exposed by a subordinate official who reported the matter to the Vali. The third is Ahmed Effendi, an ex-Director of Public Instruction, of whose past I have no particulars. A fourth may possibly be Ibrahim Effendi, ex-acting Kaïmakam of Moti. The object of the plot was to seize the opportunity thus offered for pillaging the town and neighbourhood. The Vali has incurred a grave responsibility in thus overlooking what might have had the most serious results.

The following incident may be of interest to your Excellency. Four months ago some Kurds attacked a villager in some village, name unknown, in the Talori Caza of the Moush Sanjak. The man resisted when his son and one or two Kurds were killed. A report was sent to the Vali which left no doubt as to who was the guilty party. He informed the authorities at Constantinople. Further details were asked for and given. Finally he received orders to arrest and have punished the Armenian who had killed the followers of Ishain. He telegraphed that the snow made communication impossible and the matter finally dropped. This case may possibly throw some light on the impunity with which the Kurds commit their outrages, and on the policy pursued towards the Armenians.

During my stay in Bitlis I saw no Armenians owing to their fear of the police, but I believe that the hope was very strong among them that a Consul would be appointed. It seems beyond doubt that the presence of a Consul with power to travel about the villayet would have most beneficial results.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. SATOW.

Inclosure 2 in No. 41.

Vice-Consul Satow to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 13.) *Van, June 10, 1901.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that I arrived here on Friday, the 7th June, having returned from Bitlis by way of Moush and the north shore of the lake.

On my way to Moush I camped at the village of Arkevank, which now consists of twenty houses—one-third of its former size. The villagers complained that taxes were

still taken for the original sixty houses, and that, in addition, they were employed on road-making a day's march off without payment. Complaints of this nature were general throughout the Moush Plain.

I visited the village of Pertag, about one and a-half hours from Moush, which had recently been the scene of an affray, in which the Revolutionists killed one Kurd and wounded a zaptieh. A force of 500 men, including Kurds, was sent to capture them, but failed, and the Kurds seized the opportunity of looting the villagers. This village, and those of Havadorik, Arakh, and Derkevank, which are in a small valley at the foot of the Sassun Mountains, are, I believe, subject to descents of the Revolutionists, who always succeed in escaping into the mountains. The Government is guilty of gross neglect in thus allowing Kurds to take part in expeditions against the Revolutionists, as they refuse to obey the regular officers should these latter try to control them, and come solely to pillage the unfortunate villagers, who are thus exposed to great hardship. The Kurds in this neighbourhood are the Belekli, numbering about 2,000 men. Their Chief is Mehmed Agha, who lives at Miseresbero, in a valley south of the Moush Plain. I should imagine the number of Revolutionists in the district to be about fifty. The villagers in the plain are opposed to them, but I believe that they meet with considerable sympathy in the villages of the Sassun Mountains, where the people think that their position is hopeless, and have become desperate.

On arrival at Moush I noticed that a considerable number of the shops were closed, and on inquiry I found that this was the result of a panic among the Armenians, who feared that revenge would be taken for the disappearance of a Turk at Magonk, a village half-an-hour from Moush, who was supposed to have been made away with by the Revolutionists. I might say that to these latter are now attributed all crimes and disorders in the district. I was with the Mutessarif when news came that the missing man's fez had been found, and noticed that he gave orders for everything to be done as quietly as possible.

The latter is Hakki Pasha, from Constantinople, and formerly Mutessarif of Sana, in the Yemen. He seems amiable and well-disposed, but far too weak for his difficult post. His trusted adviser is Khalil Effendi, ex-Mayor of the town, who was dismissed for venality.

The Mouavin, who is said to be an able man, is at present under arrest at Bitlis, accused of complicity with the Revolutionists. The true facts are that he was employed in translating documents in a case in which a woman was accused of revolutionary sympathies. He was asked for an unofficial opinion on the worth of the documents as evidence, and gave it as his opinion that they were sufficient to convict. This was misunderstood, and on his wrongly-interpreted opinion the woman was acquitted. Information of this was sent to Constantinople, and orders have arrived from there to have him tried and condemned. He is now awaiting his trial in Bitlis.

The Military Commandant is Akif Bey, formerly at Van during the massacre, when he showed up well.

The troops in garrison are the 2nd Battalion of the 29th Regiment and the 4th Battalion of the 32nd Regiment, a battery of mountain guns, and two squadrons of cavalry. Two guns and the two squadrons have been sent south to assist in putting down the Arabs, and the place of the latter has been taken by one squadron from Khanus.

The policy in the vilayet seems to be to prevent all those by whom information might be given as to the state of affairs from leaving the vilayet. The Armenian Catholic Bishop of Moush, when he recently wished to go to Van, was peremptorily forbidden to do so. Armenians are not allowed to leave, and consequently have suffered.

The Catholic community, who number about 6,000, seem better off than their Orthodox compatriots, and their villages suffer considerably less from the ravages of Kurds. These latter seem to enjoy complete freedom as to robbing their Christian neighbours, and the authorities by employing them against the Revolutionists seem to countenance their depredations. In the Van Vilayet, should any expedition of such a nature be necessary, the Kurds are always at once dismissed and forbidden to remain near the scene of operations.

The authorities in the Bitlis Vilayet showed great solicitude for my safety, and insisted on surrounding me with absurdly large escorts despite my efforts to the contrary. This was nominally in my honour, but the Lieutenant in command told me that at Akhlat he was summoned late at night by the Kaïmakam and questioned closely as to my movements. I fancy that the authorities thought I was going into the Sassun district, and took precautions accordingly. There may be, therefore, some truth in what I wrote to your Excellency respecting the proposal to remove the Armenians from those mountains.

In the Akhlat Caza the Haideranli and Hasseranli Kurds (Fatih Agha and Abd-ur-Resak Agha) had recently been fighting, but not much harm had resulted. As they had taken to pillaging travellers, zaptieh posts had been established, and in several villages regular troops were quartered.

I passed through Adeljivas in the Van Vilayet. The Kaïmakam, Mahmud Bey, though refined and well-educated, is a perfectly useless official in such a post. He is weak and vacillating, and seems to take advice from any one who gives it. The general complaint was that Hussein Pasha was the only Kaïmakam.

At Kojeri, two hours from Adeljivas, I heard great complaints about the latter. I saw some granaries which he had forced the villagers to build, pulling down their houses, and cutting down their trees to provide the materials. He has seized a large proportion of their pastures, and his last move has been to demand 300 liras in ready money from this and seven neighbouring villages. The Government seem unable to prevent such outrages by so powerful a man as Hussein Pasha, especially as he is supported from Erzingian.

At Gugus, a village of Raya Kurds, four hours from Arjish, the people seem little better off than their Armenian neighbours. There, too, Hussein Pasha had seized pastures. The people complained that it was difficult to obtain necessities like rice and tobacco, as travellers were afraid to move about the country. The general feeling was that until Hussein Pasha is removed there can be no peace in the district.

The country round Arjish has been somewhat disturbed lately owing to the fighting between the Haideranli and the Adamanli, whose Chief is Kulikhan Bey, resident in the Zilan Valley. During the recent disturbance one Haideranli and three Adamanli were killed and several wounded on both sides. The Kaïmakam of Arjish has been temporarily transferred to Barghiri and Ahmed Shevki Bey from that caza is now at Arjish. He seems an excellent official and very successful in dealing with the Kurds.

Near Arjish I passed a Captain of regular infantry returning to that town with his arm completely shattered. He had been treacherously shot by Haideranli Kurds in the Abagha Plain, but as the Vali tells me the perpetrators cannot be found, this outrage too will go unpunished.

In passing I visited the petroleum springs, one hour from Kovzut in the Barghiri Caza. There was not much to be seen, as the Government has filled up the wells, but from what the villagers, who used to burn it, say, the supply must be fairly abundant.

In conclusion I would say that the opinion I frequently heard expressed by all classes and races was, that a Government which had adopted the present policy towards the Hamidieh Kurds was becoming intolerable, and that any rule, even that of Russia would be preferable to the present régime.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. SATOW.

Inclosure 3 in No. 41.

Vice-Consul Satow to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 14.) *Van, June 10, 1901.*

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to return herewith the correspondence respecting the recent threatened attack on the Tiari Christians.

The following Commissioners from Julamerk have gone down to Reshid Bey at Berwar, Shamasha, Yukhanan, ex-Syrian member of the Council of the Sanjak of Hekkiari, and Mustapha Agha of Julamerk. They were accompanied by an officer and thirty men, as they were suspicious of Reshid's intentions. The Commissioners from the Mosul Vilayet are:—

Sheikh Alohdin of Barmarni, Moussa Pasha of Mosul, the Alai Bey (Commandant of Gendarmery) from Mosul, and Abdallah Pasha, Kaïmakam of Amadia. They, too, were accompanied by troops. The Kurdish Agha of Chol, who is friendly to the Syrians, has also gone, carrying the sealed testimony of the Apinshaü (Pinyanish) Kurds of the Van Vilayet, and of the Nerwa, Dudas, and Rikan Kurds of the Mosul Vilayet, and of the Bebaydin party, which declares that the Tiari men are in the right and have suffered grievous wrong from Berwari. Malik Berkho of Lower and Malik Ismaïl of Upper Tiari have written to the Vali here explaining that since the murder of Malik Yussuf of Lizan, Reshid Bey has been responsible for the death of some twenty Tiari men, women,

M

and children, and has carried off some 7,000 sheep, besides seizing the lands which Tiari men had brought in the Berwari country within the last three years.

From what I hear I fear that the Commissioners have been tampered with by Reshid Bey, as they are now staying with him as his guests. They will probably try and make the Tiari men come down to salute Reshid and admit that they are in the wrong. The results will be most deplorable should the latter be allowed to escape scot free, as the Government admit that he is guilty of the murder of Malik Yussuf last October. The Tiari Syrians have hitherto showed extraordinary self-restraint owing to the efforts of the Mar Shimun and the English missionaries on behalf of peace, but they are a warlike people and should the Government fail to do them justice, I fear that they will attempt to take the law into their own hands with very disastrous results to themselves.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. SATOW.

No. 42.

Thames Iron Works Shipbuilding and Engineering Company to Sir N. O'Conor.—(Communicated to Foreign Office by Mr. Hills, July 8.)

Dear Sir Nicholas, *Orchard Yard, Blackwall, June 29, 1901.*

THE Council of Administration of the Syria Ottoman Railway met yesterday morning and discussed at length the report which I made to them of the negotiations I had recently conducted on their beinlf with the Turkish Government.

Generally they approved of what had been done, and they desired me to express their cordial thanks to you for all the trouble you have taken over this complicated business.

They did not, however, at all approve of the sum of 200,000*l.* fixed for the sale of the Concession and the railways, and the figures that I am now able to inclose for your information will show you that the price I originally fixed—300,000*l.*—much more nearly represents the cash value of the Concession than the smaller sum fixed, in consultation with yourself, for the purpose, if possible, of arriving at some amicable settlement.

The Council were not, however, prepared to repudiate their President, and they accepted the position I had taken up on their behalf; but they wish me to say that this proposal of 200,000*l.*, made originally by the Hedjaz Commission for the sale of railway and Concession with terms of payment spread over a period of years, will not be continued by them after the 31st of July.

If no settlement or payment is made during the month of July, then the price for the sale of the railway and Concession will be raised to 300,000*l.*

I shall be obliged if you will inform the Turkish Government of this; meanwhile I have arranged to see Lord Lansdowne on Tuesday next, and if I can secure the support of the Government, shall proceed at once with the construction of the line.

Believe me, &c.
(Signed) A. F. HILLS.

Inclosure in No. 42.

SYRIA OTTOMAN RAILWAY.

CASH Found since taken over by A. F. Hills.

	£	s.	d.
Rails (say)	15,000	0	0
Sleepers (say)	15,000	0	0
Deposit (say)	10,000	0	0
Crane, tip-trucks, contractor's plant (say)	5,000	0	0
Engineers' fees (say)	2,000	0	0
Construction costs in Syria (say)	50,000	0	0
Sundries: Interest, London Office, journeys to Constantinople, &c. (say)	10,000	0	0
	107,000	0	0
Value of concessional rights (say)	50,000	0	0
Spent by original promoters (say)	150,000	0	0
Total	307,000	0	0

The offer to sell railway and Concession for 200,000*l.* does not include rails, sleepers, plant, or deposit.

CASH Advanced since commencement of Enterprise by original Promoters.

	£	s.	d.
1. Original Syndicate	25,818	1	4
2. Subscription to Asia (Limited)	9,441	0	9
3. Subscription to Syrian Construction Company (Limited)	6,000	0	0
4. Advanced by Mr. Pauling	3,150	0	0
5. Syria Ottoman Railway, Bank of Syria	14,784	2	5
6. Advanced to Syria Ottoman Railway by Union Bank of Manchester	42,552	1	8
7. Law costs of various Companies	5,000	0	0
8. Advanced to Syria Ottoman Railway since the 7th June, 1894	14,000	0	0
9. Cash found by Mr. Pilling (say)	30,000	0	0
Total	151,045	6	2

These figures include no interest on monies advanced, much of which has been outstanding since 1891.

I understand that over 50,000*l.* in cash has been spent by the original promoters in the purchase of the Concession, with its subsequent extensions of time.

No. 43.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 14.)

(No. 256.) *Therapia, July 10, 1901.*

My Lord,

I TOOK an opportunity two days ago of speaking to the Minister for Foreign Affairs very earnestly respecting the condition of affairs in the Bitlis and Moush districts of Armenia, and the dangers to which the Christians are exposed as reported in Mr. Satow's late despatches, of which copies were forwarded to your Lordship in my despatch No. 250 of the 2nd instant.

I said that the proceedings of the Kurds, unrestrained by the local authorities, were rendering the lives of the unfortunate Christian inhabitants in certain districts quite intolerable, and that the Imperial Government could not pursue a policy more detrimental to their own interests. I said I was unofficially communicating to the Minister of the Interior the substance of these reports, and begged his earnest attention to the matter.

Towfik Pasha said that he would consult with the Grand Vizier and Minister of the Interior with a view to seeing what recommendations could be made to the Sultan on the subject, who probably was not aware of the real condition of affairs.

I also spoke of the hardships caused by the collection of arrears of taxes dating back to before the massacres which the inhabitants were quite unable to pay, and which were often enforced only by selling everything the unfortunate peasant possessed.

I have received a further despatch from Mr. Satow reporting the result of the recent inquiry at Berwar, a copy of which I have the honour to inclose.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 43.

Vice-Consul Satow to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 15.) *Van, June 17, 1901.*

Sir,

IN continuation of my despatch No. 14 of the 10th June, I have the honour to inform your Excellency of the result of the recent inquiry at Berwar.

Mon from Lizan, the village of the murdered Malik Yussuf and Malik Berkhut, of Lower Tiari, were summoned to Berwar to make peace. This they were not

inclined to do unless the murderer of Yussuf was punished. They also seemed to think it hopeless to try and influence an assembly in which there were three Sheikhs. The Agha of Chol was rebuked by the Sheikh of Barmarni for speaking in favour of Tiari, whereupon he grew angry and went off. He was, however, persuaded to return and sign the *procès-verbal* which has been drawn up and sent to the Valis of Van and Mosul. This declares that the Tiari men are at fault in not coming and making peace. It was also signed by the Nestorian member, Shamasha Yukhanan, who, like the Agha of Chol, was afraid to stand alone.

The presence of three Sheikhs, one of whom was a relative of Reshid Bey, has largely contributed to this result, but I fancy that the Mosul Commissioners had been tampered with. The Vali of Van himself told me that his Commissioners had reported that they could do nothing as the others had been bribed.

Until the receipt of fresh orders, the troops from Mosul are employed in collecting the Berwari taxes; and those from Van the taxes of Tiari.

The real hope of arriving at the truth lies in a fresh inquiry being held in the Van Vilayet in which the Sheikhs would not be able to take part nor interfere.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. SATOW.

No. 44.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 80.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, July 15, 1901.*

HAIFFA–DAMASCUS Railway.

Mr. Hills called at this Office and communicated his letter to you of the 29th ultimo.

He asks that your Excellency should be instructed to inform the Turkish Government that his offer will be withdrawn unless his terms are accepted by the end of this month, and that he will then resume the work of construction with the support of His Majesty's Government should he be opposed by the Turkish authorities.

While His Majesty's Government desire that Mr. Hills should receive all the support which they can reasonably afford him, they are not prepared to authorize your Excellency to employ language which would indicate the possible employment of force or a renewed naval demonstration against the Porte.

I must, therefore, leave it to your Excellency's discretion to consider the most effective method of advancing Mr. Hills' interests.

Mr. Hills has been told that his best course will be to follow your guidance in the matter.

No. 45.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received July 22.)

(No. 258.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 14, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus reporting the occurrence of a destructive fire in that city.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 45.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 45.)
Sir, *Damascus, June 29, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that a fire broke out yesterday afternoon in this city which speedily assumed very considerable proportions, threatening, as it did at one time, to destroy the whole of the Souk el Hamidiyé, the newest and, in

point of width and solidity of construction, the finest bazaar in Damascus. As a matter of fact, only about one-third of this street was burnt down owing to the energy and resolution of a party of soldiers, who cut a great gap in the wooden roofing and masonry of the bazaar and so prevented the fire from spreading, a total absence of any wind contributing not a little to the success of their efforts. In addition to the Hamidiyé bazaar, two streets of less importance, known as the Souk el Khoja and the Souk el Nisswan, were almost entirely destroyed.

It is calculated that as many as 225 shops, large and small, have been burnt, the damage to property being put at £T100,000. This estimate, however, is necessarily only conjectural; it will be some time before it will be possible to form even a moderately accurate idea of the loss sustained. I am given to understand that none of the shops burnt were insured, such precautions being very unusual in this city even among Christian merchants and entirely non-existent among Moslems.

I regret to have to state that although many of the soldiers worked vigorously and, in one instance, as reported above, successfully in order to extinguish the conflagration, others took advantage of the general disorder and confusion not only to break into and rob shops which the fire had not reached, but actually to waylay and plunder men who were trying to salvage as much of their property as they could. I hear that the Acting Mushir, who appears to have done little or nothing to check these outrages at the time of their commission, is now instituting an inquiry into the conduct of his men, the result being that some of the stolen property has already been restored.

In conclusion I should state that owing to the fact that fires are most unusual occurrences in Damascus, this being only the second or third serious fire in the course of the last forty years, the inhabitants, and indeed the authorities too, had apparently come to the conclusion that it was not worth while taking any steps to meet and cope with such rare and improbable contingencies. This is the only explanation of the fact—unless indeed fatalism, pushed to its extreme limit, be another—that the three or four little hand-pumps which were produced were either unworkable or in any case absolutely ineffectual. If the fire had broken out at night and there had been a strong wind half the city would undoubtedly have been destroyed. Such a disaster, had it occurred, would have been all the more deplorable, in that Damascus is as well supplied with water as any city in the world, so that even a very moderate provision of good pumps would have rendered it impossible.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 46.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 83.)
(Telegraphic.) F. *Foreign Office, July 24, 1901.*

HAIFFA–DAMASCUS Railway.

Mr. Hills called at this Office yesterday and inquired what progress had been made towards a settlement, the date fixed for the withdrawal of his offer of compromise being at hand.

I request your Excellency to inform me of the present state of the matter.

No. 47.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 85.)
(Telegraphic.) F. *Foreign Office, July 29, 1901.*

HAIFFA–DAMASCUS Railway.

The information contained in your Excellency's telegram No. 75 of the 26th instant has been communicated to Mr. Hills.

He is prepared to accept, on behalf of the Council of Administration, your suggestion that plant and sleepers to the value of 5,000*l.* should be included in the sale of the Railway Concession.

The Council are still anxious if possible to have the Concession regularized, and to obtain permission to proceed with the works, but in the event of a settlement being secured by means of sale, Mr. Hills hopes that your Excellency will bear in mind the

promise which has been frequently made by the Ottoman Government that, should the Sultan require outside contractors for the construction of harbours or railways within the boundaries of the Concession, the Company should be granted a preferential right to construct them.

He would send a power of attorney without delay to Mr. Ramsay.

No. 48.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 5.)

(No. 279.)

Therapia, July 29, 1901.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 244 of the 1st July, I have the honour to transmit an extract from the "Moniteur Oriental," stating that the Mussulmans of Natal have subscribed 1,000*l.* towards the construction of the Damascus-Mecca Railway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 48.

Extract from the "Oriental Advertiser," July 26, 1901

DAMASCUS-MECCA RAILWAY.

THE "Ikdam" says that the Mussulmans of Natal [?] have collected a sum of 1,000*l.* for this railway, and they also request that plans of the same may be forwarded to them.

The Emir of Shemer and Makalla, Avaz-bin-Omer-ul-Kati, has offered 20,000 rupees for the building of the line.

No. 49.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 107.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, August 12, 1901.*

MR. HILLS asks for information as to the present state of the Haifa-Damascus Railway question.

I request that your Excellency will report to me on the subject.

No. 50.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received August 18.)

(No. 303.)

Therapia, August 12, 1901.

My Lord,

IN reply to your Lordship's telegraphic inquiry on the 12th instant as to the present state of the Haifa-Damascus Railway negotiation, the details of which have doubtless been reported to Mr. Hills in full by Messrs Foord and Ramsay, his agents in Constantinople, I have the honour to state as follows:—

Apart from the assistance which I have personally endeavoured to afford by interviews from time to time with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Fitzmaurice has repeatedly attended, by my directions, the meetings of the Special Commission appointed by the Sultan to sit at Yildiz Palace for the settlement of the question.

After Mr. Hills' departure from Constantinople the Commission required that his agents should be furnished with powers of attorney, and that before proceeding further

it should be clearly ascertained whether the sleepers or other plant of the railway stored in London was or was not included in the 200,000*l.* demanded by Mr. Hills.

There was much delay in sending the powers of attorney, but in a letter addressed to myself Mr. Hills stated clearly that the plant in question was not included in the price, which, he added, would be raised to 300,000*l.* after the end of July if no settlement had then been reached.

On being informed accordingly the Commission declared that they found it difficult to reconcile Mr. Hills' requirements with a former statement made by him to the Grand Vizier to the effect that the sum actually spent on the railway had been 150,000*l.*, which presumably included the plant.

The agents wrote for explanations on these points, but no reply was received, and little progress made at the ensuing meetings when Izzet Bey, who has had the chief part in conducting the negotiation, was kept away by illness.

Having heard that a great point was made by the Commission of their desire to secure the inclusion in the purchase price of at least a portion of the plant, Mr. Hills was induced, as your Lordship is aware, to consent to give over some 5,000*l.* worth of sleepers and other plant.

In the meantime, however, Mr. Hills' statement to the Grand Vizier, with reference to the 150,000*l.*, was found and produced by the Commission. It was a written document purporting to give the sum actually spent on the enterprise.

Mr. Fitzmaurice did not fail to point out that it included neither interest (reckoned in Turkey at 9 per cent. per annum) nor the large sum payable for the goodwill of a concern which the owner was only selling under compulsion.

The Commission promised a firm offer on the 3rd August, and though the date at which Mr. Hills had declared that his demands would be raised had then passed, I desired Mr. Fitzmaurice to attend the Commission again and hear the result. It took the form of an offer of 64,000*l.*, besides 16,000*l.* for the goodwill, and the 10,000*l.* caution money, or a total of 90,000*l.* Mr. Fitzmaurice stated that in view of the inadequate proposals now made His Majesty's Embassy could take no responsibility for the consequences, and he explained that the 5,000*l.* worth of plant offered by Mr. Hills would now, of course, be excluded. The agents agreed to transmit the offer *pro formâ* to Mr. Hills.

I have spoken strongly to Tewfik Pasha on the failure of the Commission to give effect to the Sultan's Iradé that Mr. Hills should receive satisfaction, and I have warned him of the difficulties and complications which may ensue from their action.

I am, however, not without hope that a settlement may yet be effected. Private advances have been, I hear, made to Mr. Ramsay with a view to an agreement on the basis of a lump sum of £T. 150,000, and I am awaiting the result of these proposals.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 51.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 2.)

(No. 311.)

Constantinople, August 23, 1901.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 209 of the 29th May last, I have the honour to transmit the accompanying copies of despatches from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting further developments of the feud between the two Hamidieh Commanders, Ibrahim Pasha and Khalil Bey, the latter of whom, it will be remembered, is assisted by the Shammar tribe.

In his despatch No. 14, Mr. Jones reports that the Vali of the province who, as already reported, had been ordered to proceed to the scene of the disturbances to act as mediator between the opposing parties, had returned to Diarbekir, and that the troops sent to the disturbed district on the news of the Shammars' attack on Veranshehir had been recalled.

Continuing the narrative of this tribal feud Mr. Freeman reports that a deputation of leading ecclesiastics from Veranshehir had, apparently at the instigation of Ibrahim Pasha, visited Diarbekir and petitioned for the return of the troops to protect the

inhabitants against the Shammar tribe, and that in consequence 400 regulars had left Diarbekir for Veranshehir on instructions from Constantinople, for the protection of the non-combatant population. These troops have since been joined by two regiments from Severch.

Ibrahim Pasha is reported to have arrived at Diarbekir, whither he had been summoned in order to be examined as to his responsibility for the disturbances. He appears to have been received as a guest in the house of Azimet Bey, the Commandant of Gendarmerie, though according to Mr. Freeman, who writes from Kharput, his relations with the Vali are reported to be openly hostile. His departure from the disturbed district does not seem to have diminished the predatory activity of his followers, who, according to the latest intelligence, have, during his absence, plundered and burnt a village belonging to partisans of his rival Khalil Bey, and have followed up this outrage by attacking and defeating a body of regulars sent to recover the plunder.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 51.

Vice-Consul Jones to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 14.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, June 26, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to report that on Saturday, the 22nd instant, his Excellency the Vali of this province, whose departure for the district of Mardin was reported in my despatch No. 7 of the 9th April last, returned to Diarbekir after an absence of more than two months from this city.

I have the honour to add that according to information received the troops that had been sent to that district in connection with the dispute that arose between Ibrahim Pasha, the Hamidieh Commander, and the Shammars tribe are being recalled, and I am informed that some companies have been sent to quell disturbances that have arisen in the Dersim district. Some of these troops have already passed through this city on their way northwards, but it appears that other companies have been sent back by other routes to the stations whence they were summoned to serve in the Mardin district.

In connection with the question of the state of affairs in this province I have the honour to add that I am informed that the Vali since his return here, having received word of an attack made upon Mustapha Pasha, the Hamidieh Commander of the Djezireh district by the Agha of the Sor tribe, applied to the General of Division here for the help of the regular forces but was refused, Munir Pasha alleging, as on previous occasions, his unwillingness to assume the responsibility of authorizing any reduction in the numbers of troops, already barely sufficient for the purpose of preserving order in the city itself.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. FRANCIS JONES.

Inclosure 2 in No. 51.

Mr. Freeman to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 17.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, July 17, 1901.*

WITH reference to Mr. Jones' despatch No. 14 of the 26th ultimo, stating that troops had been recalled from the district which was recently the scene of the conflict between the Hamidiehs under the command of Ibrahim Pasha and the Shammars under their leader, Sheikh Faris, I have the honour to report that a few days ago a deputation composed of the leading ecclesiastics of the various Christian communities at Viranshehr arrived here bearing a Petition addressed to the Vali praying for the renewed dispatch of troops to that town, on the ground that the hostile attitude of the Shammars renders it necessary that measures should be taken for the security of the inhabitants.

This action on the part of the ecclesiastics, who have also addressed Petitions in the same sense to their respective Patriarchs at Constantinople, is generally understood to have been taken at the direct instigation of Ibrahim Pasha himself, whose object is

to represent the Shammars as being the aggressors in the matter, and also to furnish an excuse for his direct disobedience to the orders he has received instructing him to proceed to Diarbekir, in order to be examined in regard to his action throughout the disturbance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. G. FREEMAN.

Inclosure 3 in No. 51.

Mr. Freeman to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 19.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, July 22, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 17 of the 17th instant, I have the honour to report that 200 cavalry and 200 infantry left three days ago for Viranshehr, in accordance, I believe, with categorical instructions from Constantinople.

It is reported that these instructions are the outcome of the Petition referred to in my above-mentioned despatch, and that they prohibit any intervention on the part of the troops in the contest between the Shammars and the followers of Ibrahim Pasha, and lay stress on the protection to be afforded to the non-combatant part of the population of Viranshehr and its neighbourhood.

It remains to be seen, however, whether the dispatch of these regulars will cause any inconvenience to Ibrahim Pasha. The latter arrived at Diarbekir yesterday, and is staying with Azimet Bey, the Commandant of Gendarmerie. His visit was evidently timed to coincide with the presence here of Sheikh Said, of the Sandjak of Suleimani in the Vilayet of Mosul, and with that of the new Vali of Mosul, Nazim Bey. The Sheikh arrived on the 20th from Constantinople, and leaves to-morrow or next day for his post. I learn that Ibrahim Pasha telegraphed to His Majesty the Sultan immediately after his arrival, and subsequently conferred with the two Valis, the Sheikh, the Commandant of Gendarmerie, and the Ferik, Munir Pasha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. G. FREEMAN.

Inclosure 4 in No. 51.

Mr. Freeman to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 20.)
Sir, *Kharput, August 8, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that the Christian ecclesiastics of Viranshehr, whose visit to Diarbekir was reported in my despatch No. 17 of the 17th ultimo, succeeded in obtaining from the Vali a promise to the effect that two regiments of cavalry and two of infantry of the regular forces should be sent for their protection. On the 20th ultimo the Kaimakam of Severch, in accordance with instructions received from the Vali, dispatched one regiment of cavalry and one of infantry to Viranshehr. The Colonel in command of cavalry at Diarbekir, however, is reported to have refused to obey orders with regard to the dispatch of the two remaining regiments. On the 24th ultimo two small guns were received at Diarbekir from Mardin for transmission to Viranshehr, but were retained at Diarbekir.

On the 24th ultimo 400 of Ibrahim Pasha's Hamidiehs burned and plundered a village belonging to the Kara Fetehi Kurds, who owe allegiance to Khalil Bey, another Commander of Hamidiehs, and one of Ibrahim's bitterest foes. About thirty of the regulars who were sent, as above stated, for the protection of the non-combatant population of Viranshehr, were detailed to get back the plunder taken from the Kara Getehis. These thirty men were attacked in their turn by Ibrahim Pasha's followers, who killed eight of them and disarmed the rest. The news of this incident having been telegraphed to the Commanding Officer of the district and to the Vali, fifty cavalry were sent to the disturbed region to bury the men who had fallen, and recover the arms that had been appropriated by their opponents. I have not yet heard whether the expedition has been successful.

The relations between the Vali and Ibrahim Pasha are reported to be now openly hostile, and I am informed that they have been sending mutually recriminating telegrams to the Sultan.

A quarrel is reported to have taken place a few days ago among the Kurds of Eghil, a village district 10 hours to the north of Diarbekir, resulting in the death of two leading Beys and six of their followers. The newly-appointed Mudir of Eghil appears to have tried, but unsuccessfully, to restore tranquillity, and to have returned to Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. G. FREEMAN.

No. 52.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 2.)

(No. 319.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 27, 1901.*

I RECENTLY received a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Aleppo reporting that the authorities of Zeitoun were collecting from the inhabitants arrears of taxes for years prior to the insurrection in 1895–96.

This harsh proceeding on the part of the local authorities, besides being contrary to the spirit of the terms of the capitulations of the Zeitounlis in February 1896, is in direct contravention of instructions sent from Constantinople in April of that year and based on an Iradé from the Sultan, for the remission of all such arrears, and I am happy to be able to report that in consequence of representations which I have made to the Sublime Porte in conjunction with my colleagues of France, Russia, and Italy who had received reports on the subject from their Consular officers in Aleppo, directions have now been sent to the Vali of that province to see that the authorities of Zeitoun conform to the Imperial Iradé above mentioned.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 53.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 9.)

(No. 324.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 4, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith an extract from the "Moniteur Oriental,' announcing the opening, on the anniversary of the Sultan's accession, of the first section of the Damascus–Mecca Railway, reaching from Mezerib to Dera.

I have, &c.
(For the Ambassador),
(Signed) G. BARCLAY.

Inclosure in No. 53.

Extract from the "Moniteur Oriental."

THE HEDJAZ RAILWAY.—The anniversary of His Imperial Majesty's accession to the Throne was chosen to inaugurate the first section of the line from Damascus to Mecca, already completed from Muzerib to Dera. His Excellency Nazim Pasha, Vali of Syria, announced the event, by telegram, to his Excellency Hassan Pasha, Minister of Marine, and first member of the High Railway Commission.

The members of the local Commission, the ulemas and the sheiklis, the notables and others proceeded, by special train on Friday evening, to Muzerib, where nearly all the population of the Hauran had gathered. The train from Damascus reached Muzerib at sunset. The Mufti of Damascus, and after him the other ulemas and sheikhs, said prayers for the preservation of the precious life of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, all present shouting, "May God guard His Imperial Majesty!"

No. 54.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No 133.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, September 10, 1901.*

ACCORDING to reports which have appeared in the press, received from Erzeroum through Laffan's Telegraph Agency, 500 Armenians have attacked and burnt the Mussulman quarter of Mush. The insurgents are reported to have then retired on Sasun, where a serious engagement with Turkish regular troops is said to have ensued.

Has any information of such disturbances reached your Excellency?

No. 55.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 207.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, September 10, 1901.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 319 of the 27th ultimo, reporting the steps which you took, in conjunction with some of your colleagues, to relieve the inhabitants of Zeitoun from the exaction of arrears of taxes by the local authorities.

Your Excellency's action in the matter has my approval, and I have learned with satisfaction that your representations have been successful.

I am, &c.
(Signed) LANSDOWNE.

No. 56.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 11.)

(No. 111.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September 11, 1901.*

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram regarding Laffan's Agency's reports of troubles at Mush, I learn from a telegram from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, dated yesterday, that rumours of a massacre are current at Kharput, where it is reported that the barracks of Sasun, with a garrison of 300 troops, have been blown up by Turkish and Armenian revolutionaries.

I have asked by telegram for further information from our Consul at Erzeroum, but have not yet received a reply.

No. 57.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 11.)

(No. 112.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September 11, 1901.*

I HAVE now received a telegram from Mr. Consul Lamb, who has no confirmation of the reports of a massacre in the Mush district referred to in my immediately preceding telegram.

I questioned Tewfik Pasha on the subject yesterday, and his Excellency declared that no news of serious disturbances had reached the Government, but that eight battalions had been sent to the district of Sasun to maintain order under the command of General Mehemet Ali.

No. 58.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 16.)

(No. 328.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 6, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on the improved condition of the vilayet. I see that this improvement, which is due in great part to the presence of a strong Vali at the head of affairs, is also noticed by Major Maunsell's correspondent, the French priest, M. Defrance, in his letter, a copy of which was communicated to your Lordship's Department by the Director-General of Military Intelligence on the 16th ultimo (see your Lordship's despatch No. 201 of the 3rd instant).

With reference to the remark made by the Director-General when forwarding this communication to the Foreign Office to the effect that the writer does not allude to or appear to be conversant with the serious state of affairs in Bitlis and Moush reported from Constantinople, I beg to observe that the priest's remarks as to the tranquillity of the district appear to refer exclusively to the Vilayet of Van, and apparently are not intended to apply to districts such as Bitlis and Moush, which are outside that province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 58.

Vice-Consul Sütow to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 19.)
Sir, *Van, August 20, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that a suspected Armenian revolutionist has been recently arrested here. He is a native of Bulanik, but has come from Russia whither he had emigrated. He had in his possession a revolver and dagger, a map, presumably of the frontier, and some drawings of revolutionist medals inscribed with the words "Liberty and Justice." His explanation is that the latter were given him by some school-boy in Russia. He is quite a young man, and so far nothing has been got out of him. The Vali tells me that he is to be brought before the Court, but will very possibly be acquitted owing to lack of evidence.

Two other revolutionists are reported to have arrived from Moush. The police were informed, I am glad to say, by some of the more sensible Armenians, and are now searching for them. Should the men, who are armed, resist, I believe that the police have orders to fire.

Three villages in the Archag Nahich have been settled with Milan Kurds, some forty families having come from Persia under Gsman Agha, son of Mehmed Bey, Chief of the tribe. The villages in question are Boghaz Kessen, Haziro, and Shemseddin. The two former are Armenian, the latter Yezidi. The Government has taken pledges for their good behaviour. The villagers profess themselves pleased at this step, as they are now protected from the raids of Jaafer Bey, of the Sheveli. The latter and Nedjib Agha, of the Mukuri, are naturally dissatisfied, as their field of action is limited, and have induced several villagers to hand in Petitions of complaint. As there have, however, been no cases of cattle-lifting so far in that district, the result would seem to be beneficial.

The same absence of cattle and sheep-stealing exists, as far as I can learn, in the rest of the vilayet. The Vali has been very energetic in returning the stolen goods on those rare occasions when thefts have taken place, and even sent soldiers into the Bitlis Vilayet to recover sheep taken there from the Shattak Caza by Alikian Kurds.

The Zshiriki who attacked Major Maunsell last year are to be required to furnish recruits. To that end an official with troops has been sent to their district. He will also collect the taxes. The Government evidently will not give them another chance of getting out of hand.

Peace has been made between the Sheveli and Haideranli, and between the Tiari Nestorians and the Hartoshi Kurds.

On the whole, this year the condition of the vilayet is a decided improvement so far on previous years.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. SATOW.

No. 59.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 16.)

(No. 330.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 5, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 311 of the 23rd ultimo respecting the feud between the Shammar tribe and Ibrahim Pasha's Hamidieh troops, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Mr. Vice-Consul Freeman, reporting that Ibrahim Pasha, notwithstanding that instructions were sent to the Vali to detain him at Diarbekir, has succeeded in escaping from that place with the intention of returning to Veranshehir, in which district a further affray is reported to have occurred between his men and a force of Turkish regulars.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 59.

Vice-Consul Freeman to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 22.)
Sir, *Mamuret-ul-Aziz, August 22, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to report that further fighting has taken place recently amongst the Kurds in the Vilayet of Diarbekir. The information that I have received from Diarbekir is as follows:—

On the 28th July two villages belonging to the Milli tribe were plundered and destroyed by Kurds from two other tribes known by the names of Mahal and Metina. Some forty of the inhabitants were killed.

The next day the Millis, in their turn, fell upon another tribe, the Sorukas, killed their Chief (Emin Bey) and about 140 of his men, and carried off a number of sheep and camels.

Ibrahim Pasha, who enrols men for his Hamidiehs from among the Millis, telegraphed to Constantinople that both of these onslaughts had been the work of the Shammar Arabs.

On the 31st July Colonel Isak Bey, the Commandant of cavalry at Diarbekir, received instructions from Zekki Pasha, commanding the troops at Erzingian, to take two regiments to Veranshehir. This, as I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 20 of the 8th instant, he had already declined to do, and he telegraphed in reply to Zekki Pasha that the Shammars were a long way off, and had not attacked Ibrahim Pasha; that the desert was very hot at present, and would yield neither food nor water for his men; and that he had not yet received a sum of money which had been promised to him for repairs to the roads. He also asked for instructions as to what he should do supposing Ibrahim Pasha and the Shammars came to blows, or if the former attacked any Kurdish tribe. The Vali himself called on Isak Bey and tried to persuade him to go, and Zekki Pasha renewed his instructions; but Isak Bey held his ground, with the result that Mustafa Bey, Colonel of the 19th (Mardin) Regiment, was sent to take his place. Mustafa Bey arrived at Diarbekir on the 13th August.

On the 6th August his Excellency the Vali received instructions to prevent Ibrahim Pasha from leaving Diarbekir, and to keep the Hamidiehs at Veranshehir under control. Ibrahim Pasha, however, had the telegraph office in his pay, and was thus able to make off in time. A messenger was sent after him, followed by eight zaptiehs, but Ibrahim Pasha was not to be prevailed upon to return. The zaptiehs were only able to bring back word that the Pasha would send a reply from Veranshehir.

Ibrahim Pasha's Hamidiehs are reported to have attacked the Kara Getchis a second time, wounding sixteen of the regulars who had been sent to protect them.

Kiazim Bey, an Albanian officer in exile at Diarbekir, appears to have upbraided

Ibrahim Pasha, in the presence of the Vali, in a very outspoken fashion, following up his remarks with two telegrams to His Majesty the Sultan, dated respectively the 30th and 31st July, in which he accused the Hamidieh Chief and his subordinates, Azimet Pasha and Niazi Bey, of leading the attack on the Kara Getchis, murdering women and children, and permitting the battle-cry of "God help our Sultan Ibrahim, Khedive of the desert" during the fight with the Shammars.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. G. FREEMAN.

No. 60.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 16.)

(No. 338.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 6, 1901.*

THE Armenian Gregorian Patriarch called upon me yesterday to say that a telegram had been received from Mush, dated the 3rd instant, with the ominous words, "nous sommes chez nous." This was the conventional expression from 1894 to 1896, to signify that the sender had escaped massacre and was in security. He believed that a communication had been received at the Palace from the unhappy inhabitants of this district, craving His Imperial Majesty's protection against the outrages and attacks of the Kurds, but that in reply to his inquiries all information on the subject was denied him, and his own telegrams were stopped *en route*. Assassination and outrage was, his Beatitude said, now a matter of daily occurrence, and he had in his possession a long list of crimes committed by the Kurds upon the helpless Armenians, showing that about fifty people had been killed during the last two months. He had heard that troops had been sent to the district to maintain order, but as they were invariably followed by a horde of Kurds, who pillaged and murdered the inhabitants almost without restraint, their presence was of little use.

His Beatitude asked whether I had received any information and if not, whether I could telegraph to Mush or Bitlis.

I replied that we had no Consular Representative at Bitlis for the moment though one was going there shortly, but that I had heard from Kharput and Erzeroum that several battalions were proceeding to those districts. I informed his Beatitude that I had drawn the Minister for Foreign Affairs' earnest attention to a report that the Sassoonites were being driven from the hills to the plains of Mush, and his Excellency had stated that there was no truth in the statement. I had at the same time urged the Sublime Porte to take all necessary steps to prevent massacres and outrages such as had stained the history of Turkey in recent years. I would, however, make fresh inquiries, and inform his Beatitude if I heard of anything confirming his apprehensions.

I took an opportunity this morning of questioning the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject, and of informing him of the information I had lately received.

Tewfik Pasha said that he had heard nothing to confirm these fears: that the Minister of the Interior, to whom he had mentioned my statement that the Sassoonites were being driven from their safe home in the hills to the plains, assured him that this was not the case, and that every effort was being made to stay the depredations of the Kurds and hold them in check. He would, however, at once make fresh inquiries. He was aware of the danger of allowing anarchy and pillage to prevail, and he would again report the observations I had made to him. He hoped, however, to be able to tell me in a few days that the fears and rumours to which I had alluded were unfounded.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 61.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 16.)

(No. 338.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 9, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, according to a telegram from Mr. Consul Dickson, a Russian post office has now been opened at Jerusalem, in addition to the Austrian, French, and German Post Offices already established there.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 62.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 16.)

(No. 341.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 10, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 333, in which I reported a conversation with the Armenian Patriarch regarding the disturbed state of the Mush district, I have the honour to inform your Lordship, that a telegram has reached me this morning from Kharput showing that a report is current in that town that the barracks at Sassun with a garrison of 300 troops have been blown up by Turkish and Armenian revolutionaries. Mr. Freeman states that his informant, who is trustworthy, heard of the occurrence from friends who had been at Mush, for whose accuracy, however, he could not vouch. According to Mr. Freeman the recent movements of troops (see my despatch above referred to) are attributed in Kharput to this outrage rather than to the reported massacre. He adds that wild rumours are current.

I have inquired of His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum by telegraph whether he has any information as to the state of affairs in the district of Mush and Sassun.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 63.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 23.)

(No. 344.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 16, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 333 of the 6th instant, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that in view of the persistency of a report that a massacre of Armenians had lately taken place at Moush, I again questioned the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject on the 12th instant.

Tewfik Pasha said that he had spoken to the Minister of the Interior, who absolutely denied its truth and expressed his readiness to show my Dragoman all the telegrams he had lately received from the local authorities. The Minister, Tewfik Pasha went on to say, equally denied that the Government proposed to drive the Sassoonites from the mountains into the plains of Moush or that any project of the sort had been under consideration.

This morning Nouri Bey called at the Embassy, on Tewfik Pasha's request, to read me a telegram, dated the 13th instant, from the Vali of Bitlis, stating, in reply to a rumour that the barracks in the Sassoun district had been blown up, that none existed at present in those parts, and that for the last twenty-five days the only outrage that had occurred in Moush or in the district was the murder of a Mussulman.

Nouri Bey also confirmed the news reported by Mr. Lamb, in his despatch inclosed herewith, that several battalions had been sent from Erzeroum and elsewhere to the Moush district, and stated that this step was a precautionary measure against any action which might be taken by revolutionists or others to disturb public tranquillity.

I am not inclined to attach implicit confidence to the assurances either of the Minister of the Interior or the Vali of Bitlis, and probably the truth lies between the

reports that there has been a massacre and that no recent outrages have taken place.

The public communications which appeared in last night's press and of which copy is inclosed shows that the Government at any rate is nervous as to the impression which these reports may create in foreign countries.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 63.

Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 8.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, September 5, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that, in accordance with instructions received last week from Constantinople, Mehmed Ali Pasha, General Officer Commanding the 7th Division, left here this morning for Moush with two battalions of infantry, one squadron of cavalry, and two mountain guns.

I am informed that three battalions have been ordered to join him from Kharpout and two or three more warned to hold themselves ready to proceed if called upon, so that, including the detachments actually stationed in Moush and Bitlis, he will have at his disposal a force of fully eight battalions.

The greatest reticence is officially observed here as to the object of this concentration, for which there does not appear to be any ostensible reason, but I am given to understand that it is in connection with the carrying out of a project, attributed to Salih Pasha, the Brigadier commanding at Bitlis, for the construction of barracks on the borders of Sassoun. The Armenian villages of Shenik, Semal, and Gheliegnzan are known to have raised energetic protests against the execution of this plan, and it is believed that they may now have been supported in their opposition by the Kurds of Sassoun, both sections being alike averse to the close proximity of regular troops.

Much anxiety is felt here as to the possible upshot of a conflict between the troops and the inhabitants of Sassoun, but in the present state of my information it is difficult for me to express an opinion. I may, however, remark that the force reported to have been placed at Mehmed Ali Pasha's disposal appears to me so large as to preclude the possibility of any serious resistance, and that the dispatch of this officer to take the command over the head of Salih Pasha is, so far as it goes, reassuring, the reputation of the Brigadier not being such as to inspire confidence, while the Ferik is naturally an easy-going man, free from intolerance or religious fanaticism, and somewhat more familiar with European ideas.

His place here is temporarily occupied by Brigadier Tewfik Pasha, the Frontier Commissioner.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

Inclosure 2 in No. 63.

Newspaper Extract.

LA SÉCURITÉ ET LA JUSTICE DANS L'EMPIRE.—La Circulaire suivante vient d'être adressée d'ordre de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, par le télégraphe, à tous les Gouverneurs-Généraux des provinces :—

"Le plus grand désir de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan est de voir l'ordre et la tranquillité régner dans le pays et d'assurer à ses sujets, sans distinction de race et de religion, la sécurité, la confiance, et les bienfaits de la justice. C'est sur ces principes, ainsi que cela a été plus d'une fois communiqué aux provinces, que les fonctionnaires publics devront régler leur conduite et prévenir toute perturbation de l'ordre public. Dans le cas où la tranquillité serait compromise du fait des agitateurs, on prendra aussitôt des mesures pour étouffer toute menée, comme on aurait étouffé un incendie. La répression se fera par la force dont disposent les autorités locales sans l'intervention de la population. En tout cas on aura les plus grands soins à empêcher des actes contraires à la loi, tels que, molestations des habitants par des fonctionnaires, conflits entre la population. Les affaires publiques devront être administrées avec justice,

conformément à la volonté du Souverain. Les fonctionnaires qui agiront dans ce sens seront l'objet de récompenses; ceux, au contraire, qui s'écarteront de ces principes assumeront toute la responsabilité de leurs actes. Les Gouverneurs-Généraux sont donc tenus de faire comprendre une fois pour toutes à leurs subordonnés, ces points, afin qu'ils s'abstiennent de tout fait pouvant engager leur responsabilité et qu'ils s'acquittent de leurs devoirs, conformément aux intentions de Sa Majesté Impériale."

No. 64.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 29.)

(No. 125.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September 29, 1901.*

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram of yesterday, I have the honour to report that Mr. Ramsay, Mr. Hills' agent here, desires that a warning should be conveyed to Mr. Lafone regarding the negotiations between the Turkish Ambassador and Mr. Pilling; and that he should be informed that the proposals embodied in Mr. Ramsay's letter to the Private Secretary to the Minister of Public Works, dated the 14th instant, are the only ones made on behalf of Mr. Hills.

The proposal was made by Mr. Ramsay conditionally upon Mr. Hills' acceptance thereof.

The proposal comprised 20,000*l.* in the form of a preferential contract for transports, and 180,000*l.* in cash. It also reserved Mr. Hills' tramway concessional preferential rights.

The Turkish Ambassador's interference is only an attempt to delay matters, and to cause our negotiations to be abortive. Costaki Pasha should, therefore, be informed by Mr. Lafone that the sole legal representative of the Syrian Ottoman Railway Company is Mr. Ramsay, and that Constantinople is the necessary centre for negotiations.

No. 65.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received September 30.)

(No. 351.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 25, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from the Acting Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on the condition of the Shattak and Mukus districts, where he has recently been travelling.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 65.

Acting Vice-Consul Salow to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 20.)
Sir, *Van, September 9, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that I returned last week from visiting the districts of Shattak and Mukus, to the south of Lake Van.

I found both these cazas quiet and in a satisfactory condition.

A very good metalled road has been made by Lutfi Bey, the last Kaïmakam of Shattak, from that town to the Havatzor Valley, four hours from Van. The total cost was only £ T. 360. On the way, I passed the engineer of the vilayet surveying for the continuation from this valley on to Van. The portion of this extension already made did not strike me as satisfactory, as it was unmetalled, and would, after rain, become a morass.

The satisfactory state of Shattak is due to the energy of Lutfi Bey, who ruled the Kurds with an iron hand. The present acting Kaïmakam, Hamzeh Bey, is also a firm man, and I hope that he will be permanently appointed to the post.

As an example of what may be done with the Hamidieh, I may mention that, when

I was at Shattak, I was told that four Hamidieh officers (two Captains and two Lieutenants) belonging to the 60th (Shidan) Regiment were there in prison. They had been oppressing an Armenian village, and, on the orders of Hamzeh Bey, had been brought in, imprisoned, and flogged. They have since been brought into Van and handed over to the military authorities. Omar Bey, their Chief, has complained unsuccessfully to the Vali.

The troops have orders to fire on Kurds who resist them. As a result, at Kotrones, near Julamuk, Hamo Bey, brother of Hassan Bey, of the Hartoshi nomads, was recently killed by troops. He was stealing hay from the village, and, when ordered to stop, fired on the soldiers, who then shot him dead. He was a great rascal.

These same Shidan recently stole a horse belonging to Mr. Henzell, of the Archbishop's Mission, who had camped near one of their villages (Shahmanis) on his way to Van. The Vali is taking energetic steps to recover either the horse or its value.

A quarrel has taken place at Nurduz between some Shidan and Geravi Kurds, in which the son of Omar Bey, of the Shidan, was wounded. These inter-Kurdish quarrels are of very ordinary occurrence, and no great importance should be attached to them. They seem, however, to have decreased of late, thanks to the firmness of the authorities.

I proceeded from Shattak to Mukus by a difficult and little-used route. Mukus is not so lucky in its Kaïmakam as its neighbouring caza, as that official is the aged Iskender Bey, from Karchikan, to whom I have previously referred to as being past work. The Vali tells me that he has applied for leave for him to go to Constantinople for treatment, and that he hopes to replace him.

I stayed at Aagin at the house of a certain Mortullah Bey, a descendant of one of the old Derch Beys, an extremely enlightened Kurd. He was conspicuous at the time of the massacres for his protection of the Christians. He is a great friend of the Kaïmakam, and so his influence is felt for good throughout the caza. His pro-Christian sympathies naturally provoke the dislike of the surrounding fanatics. Recently a coalition of the principal Kurdish Chiefs and Sheikhs from all parts of the vilayet was formed against him. The Vali, however, supported him, and told the Sheiks that if they created any disturbance he would have them removed from the Vilayet. Active opposition has, therefore, dropped for the present, but has not ceased. I am afraid that in the end Mortullah Bey will decide to leave the district for Constantinople. I tried to make him see that he ought to stay, as his departure would be a really grave calamity. The situation is complicated by the presence of his brother, Nouri Bey, a bad character, recently released from six months' imprisonment for the murder of an Armenian.

On inquiry I was told that things in the caza were quiet, and that the crops had been good, though not quite as abundant as last year. This state of things is general throughout the vilayet, and as more land was under cultivation, the total production of grain is larger. The people are now beginning to recover from the recent disastrous years, although still saddled with debt, as they have to pay off the loans incurred at the enormously high rate prevailing at the time of borrowing. The price of wheat which, fifteen months ago, was 120 piastres, the "chap" is now from 10 to 15 piastres, and that of barley has fallen from 70 piastres to 7½ piastres the "chap." The only exception to the generally good harvest is found in the Tiari district of Hekkiari. The drought prevailing in Mosul and the districts south of the mountains has reached as far as this district, causing a failure of the rice crop, and the Nestorians will this winter have a hard time.

The next caza to Muskus is that of Khizan in the Bitlis Vilayet. I heard of an outrage committed by Kurds at the village of Spasgerd, where fifty of them attacked an Armenian wedding-party escorting the bride home. They carried off the bride, who is now in a Kurdish harem.

Reports from Bitlis say that a very considerable number of murders have occurred there and in the Moush plain. Some of these may be in retaliation for attacks of revolutionists, but these would be in the minority. The Russian Vice-Consul left last week for a tour in that vilayet.

On my return I passed through Vostan in the Kiavash Caza, where Lutfi Bey has been installed as Kaïmakam. He is to devote his attention to road-making, and has already begun improvements which will facilitate communication between Bitlis and Van.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. E. SATOW.

No. 66.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 7.)

(No. 352.)
Constantinople, September 27, 1901.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship, with reference to my despatch No. 338 of the 9th instant, the accompanying despatch from Consul Dickson, reporting the opening of a Russian post-office at Jerusalem.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 66.

Consul Dickson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 52.)
Jerusalem, September 10, 1901.

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram of the 6th instant, I have the honour to report to your Excellency that on the 5th instant the Russian Government opened a post-office in Jerusalem, in addition to those recently established by the German and French postal authorities and to the Austrian post-office, which has been in existence for many years by permission of the Turkish Government as a special favour. Claiming the privilege of the most-favoured-nation treatment accorded by the Capitulations, Germany, shortly after the visit to Palestine of the Emperor in 1898, opened a post-office in Jerusalem, to be on the same footing with Austria, and was immediately followed by France, who also established a post-office in this city, besides the one she already had at Jaffa. Russia has now claimed the same rights as Austria, Germany, and France, and has opened her post-office in Jerusalem.

The opening ceremony was attended by the Russian Consul-General and his staff, by the Russian Archimandrite, and by the members of the Palestine Society, and a *Te Deum* was sung by the Russian clergy and a blessing pronounced by the Archimandrite. The Russian coat-of-arms has also been placed over the door of the office.

I have the honour to add that, considering the large number of German residents and colonists in Jerusalem and its suburbs, the numerous priests and sisters of charity in the different conventual establishments under French protection, and the thousands of Russian pilgrims who annually visit Jerusalem, the German, French, and Russian post-offices now established are likely to be remunerative.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN DICKSON.

No. 67.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 7.)

(No. 353.)
Constantinople, September 27, 1901.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship, with reference to my despatch No. 324 of the 3rd instant, the accompanying despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting the trial trip over the completed section of the Hedjaz Railway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 67.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 56.)

Damascus, September 3, 1901.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 32 of the 7th May, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that, on the 1st instant, being the anniversary of the accession of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, the first train was dispatched from Mezerib over the first completed portion of the Mecca, or, rather, as it is now officially termed, the Hedjaz Railway, as far as the village of Dera'a, a distance of (about) 7½ miles. I am informed by the Vali, who was to have inaugurated the opening of this first section of the line, but was prevented from doing so by indisposition, that the train performed the journey from Mezerib to Dera'a and back in an hour, which is considered satisfactory. His Excellency also tells me that the line is really completed, and the rails laid over a distance of 25 kilom.—say, 16 miles—but that, Dera'a being the chief town of the caza of that name, it was thought advisable to make it the goal of the first trip. I understand that the earthworks are now finished over a distance of 35 kilom.—say, 22 miles.

The Vali, who appears to be very pleased with Herr Meissner, the chief Engineer of the construction corps, says that the progress made with the work recently is satisfactory, if somewhat slow.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 68.

International Permanent Peace Bureau to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 9.)

M. le Ministre,

Berne, le 3 *Octobre*, 1901.

LE dixième Congrès Universel de la Paix, réuni à Glascow, en Septembre dernier, a chargé notre Bureau d'adresser une requête aux Puissances Signataires du Traité de Berlin, en vue de la réunion d'une Conférence officielle pour donner une solution à la question Arménienne par l'exécution du projet de réformes de 1895, qui était lui-même une application de l'Article LXI du Traité de Berlin confirmant l'Article XVI du Traité de San-Stéfano.

Il y a plus de vingt ans que le Gouvernement Ottoman s'est engagé solennellement devant les Puissances Européennes à "réaliser sans plus de retard les améliorations et les réformes exigées par les besoins locaux dans les provinces habitées par des Arméniens, à garantir leur sécurité et à donner périodiquement connaissance des mesures prises à cet effet aux Puissances qui en surveilleront l'exécution."

C'était bien là une question d'ordre international. Or, la situation lamentable qui avait rendu nécessaire cette intervention Européenne en faveur des Arméniens n'a fait qu'empirer depuis cette époque.

Aussi, les Gouvernements Anglais, Français, et Russe, ont-ils élaboré, en Mai 1895, le projet de réformes rappelé ci-dessus, projet intitulé "Mémorandum" et destiné à assurer aux populations Arméniennes si cruellement éprouvées le droit à la vie et à la sécurité.

Malheureusement ce projet, élaboré sous l'impression des massacres de Sassoun et approuvé par le Sultan, n'a pas été mis à exécution; il est resté lettre morte, comme l'engagement solennel que renfermait le Traité de Berlin. Les massacres ont continué par intermittance: dans le district de Bitlis à Spagank, par exemple, l'année dernière, à Mouche et à Sassoun, tout récemment encore.

Il ne paraît pas possible, M. le Ministre, que les Gouvernements garants de la sécurité des Arméniens restent plus longtemps inactifs.

En accueillant notre requête avec l'intention de réagir sérieusement contre cet état de choses plein de menaces, les Puissances Signataires du Traité de Berlin serviront doublement la cause de l'humanité, car elles contribueront à mettre un terme aux trop longues souffrances d'un peuple martyr et, par l'application des réformes promises aux Arméniens, elles supprimeront une des principales causes des conflagrations toujours à l'état latent dans cette partie du monde.

Veuillez agréer, M. le Ministre, avec l'expression de notre confiance en vos sentiments généreux, l'assurance, &c.

Au nom du Bureau International Permanent de la Paix:

Le Président,

(Signé) FREDRIK BAJER.

Le Secrétaire Honoraire,

(Signé) ELIE DUCOMMUN.

No. 69.

Messrs. Cox and Lafone to Foreign Office.—(Received October 10.)

17, *Tower Royal, Cannon Street, London, October* 10, 1901.

Sir,

REFERRING to our interview on the 2nd instant respecting the Syria Ottoman Railway, I now beg to advise you that I yesterday had an interview with the Turkish Ambassador. He informed me that he had received instructions from Constantinople about a fortnight ago to approach Mr. Hills, the Syria Ottoman Railway Company, and Mr. Pilling (as the original concessionnaire), with a view to a settlement on the basis of a cash payment of 100,000*l*., and a preferential right to a contract for construction of sixteen vessels for the Turkish Government. He accordingly wrote Mr. Pilling and has since had several interviews with him. They do not, however, appear to have dealt much with the terms mentioned, but rather with a suggestion, which I think must have been the real point of the Ambassador's instructions, that either Mr. Hills or Mr. Pilling should arrange to finance the Turkish Government, not only in settling with the Syria Ottoman Railway, but in completing the construction for the Government of the Akka to Damascus Railway. Anyhow, this is the point with which Mr. Pilling is concerning himself at present. I have informed the Ambassador that I, and not Mr. Pilling, represent Mr. Hills during his absence, and that, as such representative, I prefer that any negotiations for a settlement shall be carried on in Constantinople, and not in two places at once as at present. He has promised to communicate this to his Government.

I am, &c.

(Signed) HAROLD LAFONE,

Attorney for A. F. Hills.

No. 70.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 14.)

(No. 362.)

Constantinople, October 6, 1901.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copies of despatches from Mr. Vice-Consul Freeman, reporting further developments of the feud between the Kurds and the Shammar Arabs, in the neighbourhood of Diarbekr.

I have, &c.

(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 70.

Vice-Consul Freeman to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 23.)

Mamuret-ul-Aziz, September 13, 1901.

Sir,

IN my last despatch No. 22 of the 22nd August, I had the honour to mention to your Excellency the telegrams sent to His Majesty the Sultan, by Kiazim Bey, a political exile at Diarbekr, bringing serious charges against Ibrahim Pasha and Azamet Pasha.

My Dragoman has reported that a telegram was received by the Vali of Diarbekr from the Ministry of the Interior on the 24th August, informing him that Azamet

Pasha was to relinquish his post as Commandant of Gendarmerie, and render an account of his twenty years' service. On the 29th the Commandant himself received telegraphic orders from the Seraskerate to proceed to Erzingian, in order to be tried by court martial. He has just passed through this city on his way there.

The same day an Imperial Iradé was received, requiring the appearance of Ibrahim Pasha, Chief of the Millis, and Mustafa Pasha, of Jéziré, Chief of the Miran tribe, before the Criminal Court of Constantinople. Is-hak Bey, who is in command of the cavalry at Diarbekr, was at the same time ordered to collect the arrears of taxes owed by Ibrahim and his tribe, amounting to £T. 4,000. Behaeddin Pasha, a Lieutenant-Colonel of Hamidiés, was to go this week from Mardin with two regiments of cavalry, in order, if possible, to persuade Ibrahim Pasha to obey the Imperial summons without compelling the Government to use force.

The answer which, as I reported to your Excellency in my above-mentioned despatch, Ibrahim Pasha promised to send from Viranshehr, reached Diarbekr on the 19th August. In it, the Milli Chief pointed out that the town was surrounded by Shammar Arabs; that, therefore, he could not leave, and that he was in need of immediate help. He appears also to have appealed by telegraph to Zekki Pasha, who again wired to Is-hak Bey, asking him why the two cavalry regiments had not yet gone to Virmshehr. Is-hak Bey again replied that he had no money; this was at last provided, and the force left on the 22nd, under the command of Mustafa Bey.

The summoning to Constantinople of the Head of the Miran tribe, Mustafa Pasha, is perhaps due in part to the action taken by delegates from twenty Turkish and five Christian villages lying to the west of Jéziré, who, in a long Petition to the Vali of Diarbekr, Khalid Bey, and in a telegram to the Sultan, and another (from the Christian delegate) to the Syrian Patriarch, set forth in detail the wrongs suffered by their people at the hands of Mustafa Pasha and of his son-in-law, Tahir Agha, a major in the Hamidiés (Tahir Agha, in his turn, appears to have telegraphed to the Vali that the Turkish delegate is in league with the Kurdish revolutionary Abdurrahman, son of Bad'r Khan Pasha, and by this convenient device to have succeeded, for the present at least, in turning the tables on his accuser).

In another quarrel on the 18th August, between Ibrahim Pasha's followers and the Kara Getchis, forty-three of the former and sixty of the latter are said to have been killed, and many wounded on both sides.

With regard to the encroachments of the Arabs, a well-informed correspondent writes to me as follows from Mardin, under date of the 19th August:—

"The Arabs are continually raiding Ibrahim Pasha, carrying off everything they can, killing and plundering everything that comes in their way. They say [?] another big raid was made four or five days ago, when 70 [?] Arabs were killed, 200 [?] horses, 300 [?] guns were taken from Ibrahim Pasha, which means that none of the riders of those horses got off safely. The Arabs are crowding the tribe directly south of Mardin so closely that they are going in crowds towards Diarbekr.

* * * * * *

"The Effendi asked him (a Kurd) why he was engaged in such business. He said it was from hunger, not from choice. Everything had been taken from them, and they were obliged to.

"The Government pays absolutely no attention to them. The only wonder is that there is not much more murder and robbery done. The result would be the same—as far as the Government is concerned."

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. G. FREEMAN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 70.

Vice-Consul Freeman to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 24.)

Sir, *Mamuret-ul-Aziz, September 20, 1901.*

WITH reference to my last despatch No. 23 of the 13th instant, I have the honour to report that on the 17th instant, Abdulkadir Pasha Tchelebi of Mardin, and Osman Agha of Derik, friends of Ibrahim and Mustafa Pashas, were brought to Diarbekr under escort, in order to be sent to Constantinople for examination in regard to the Shammar disturbances. They are, at present, at liberty in the town.

It is now said that as much as £T. 51,000 has to be recovered from Ibrahim

Pasha and his tribe in respect of arrears of taxes, and £T. 40,000 from Mustafa Pasha and his.

The Shammar Chief, Sheikh Faris Pasha, having telegraphed to the Sultan that he desired to make His Majesty a present of all the property stolen from him by Ibrahim Pasha's followers, this, or rather its equivalent, is now being collected from Kurdish villages that had no hand in the pillaging, and sold in open market at Diarbekr, and the proceeds remitted to Constantinople. The amount of this live stock is said to be far greater than that of the original plunder.

Behaeddin Pasha came to Diarbekr from Mardin on the 7th, to consult with the Vali before proceeding on his mission of trying to persuade Ibrahim to go to Constantinople. He also, I am informed, received orders from Zekki Pasha to attempt to bring about a reconciliation between Ibrahim Pasha and Khalil Bey, the Chief of the Kara Getchis. The two tribes met again in conflict on the 3rd, both incurring severe losses as before.

Until the middle of this month Mustafa Pasha had confined his attentions to the Arabs. Then, however, after taking the precaution of telegraphing to the Sultan the wildly improbable story that 10,000 Armenian revolutionaries had collected round Jéziré, and were going to raise the standard of rebellion in company with the Shammars and a son of the late Bedr Khan Pasha, Ahmed of the Agha-es-Sor tribe, he began to show his devotion by burning and plundering the Syrian villages of Staurik and Garhasi, near Jéziré, and murdering some of the inhabitants, and looting the Turkish villages of Destedar and Kasrdip. My Dragoman's informant was the Mussulman delegate mentioned in my last despatch as having brought a Petition to his Excellency the Vali of Diarbekr complaining of Mustafa Pasha's misdeeds, and himself the owner of the two Turkish villages mentioned above, and of several others. His information, I venture to believe, was substantially correct. On Mustafa Pasha's fabrication being telegraphed back from Constantinople to the Vali, his Excellency replied—as, I understand, is true—that there are no Armenians at all at Jéziré, the inhabitants being all Jacobins and Chaldeans. In obedience to his instructions, however, he sent a supply of rifles and powder to the troops at Uridiat and Husseinkef; and a regiment of cavalry and a battalion of infantry appear to have gone to Jéziré from Bitlis, Is-hak Bey, the Acting Ferik at Diarbekr, having declared that he could not spare any more troops.

My Dragoman also informs me that on the 17th the Vali received a Circular telegram from the First Secretary of the Palace conveying His Majesty's commands that if any collision occurs between any of the peoples or tribes in the Empire, no scope ("meidan") is to be given to it. Mr. Thomas points out that a similar Iradé was received at Diarbekr shortly before the last massacres.

On the 19th instructions were received by the Vali and Is-hak Bey to the effect that all the Shammar Sheikhs must be taken, alive or dead.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. G. FREEMAN.

No 71.

Mr. Pilling to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 18.)

Effingham House, Arundel Street, Strand, London, October 17, 1901.

My Lord,

I BEG to notify your Lordship that, through the honourable action of the Turkish Government, I have learned that our Ambassador at Constantinople, his Excellency Sir Nicholas O'Conor, has for some time been negotiating for the sale of the Acre to Damascus Railway to the Turkish Government for the sum of 180,000*l.*, and to secure the payment of this sum to the Syria Ottoman Railway Company.

I am surprised at this information, as such action, if successful, would perpetrate a wrong to me and other interested parties.

Your Lordship will perceive this when I state that I hold a lien and charge upon the Company's Concession and property, by virtue of a deed, duly executed by the Company in my favour, bearing date the 7th June, 1894, for the sum of 70,000*l.*, with interest now exceeding a further sum of 25,000*l.*, no portion of which 95,000*l.* has been paid to me.

For the purpose of securing the continuation of the construction of the railway, I have at various times borrowed moneys from my friends, giving them a mortgage upon

my said lien and charge. Neither myself nor my friends has authorized the said proposed sale of the Concession, and we especially decline to allow the sale price to go into the possession and control of the Company—our mortgagor—for this would denude us of our security under the said deed.

On the 28th June last Mr. Hills (the President of the Council of Administration of the Company) requested me to assent to the proposed sale, which I categorically refused to do. Since that time neither Mr. Hills nor the Company informed me the attempt to sell was being proceeded with. Such information came to me a few days ago from the Turkish Government. No sale can take place, and no title to the Company's Concession and property can be given without the assent and signature of myself and mortgagees, nor will such assent and signature be accorded in advance of the discharge of my said lien and charge. Hence, the Turkish Government is also being misled in these negotiations.

In 1898 we entered into a conditional Agreement with Mr. Hills and the Company, under which satisfaction was provided for my lien and charge. Mr. Hills failed to fulfil the terms of that Agreement, which accordingly lapsed, and my lien and charge thus continues in full force.

I beg now to notify the above to His Majesty the King's Government, and will do the same to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan's Government.

We will look with confidence that from now each Government will safeguard the interests and rights of myself and friends to the fullest extent.

I shall be glad to supply your Lordship with a copy of my said lien and charge on the whole of the Company's Concession and property.

This opportunity is also taken to remind your Lordship that I am the concessionnaire of the railway, and as such transferred my rights to the Company, subject to payment of my said lien and charge. Unless and until the said payment be made, I claim, and in due course will enforce, my right to revert to my original position as concessionnaire.

The advances to the Company by Mr. Hills and his friends are less than one-third of the amount contributed by myself and friends.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. R. PILLING.

No. 72.

Mr. Lafone to Foreign Office.—(*Received October* 18.)

17, *Tower Royal, Cannon Street, London,*
October 17, 1901.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inclose, for your information, a copy of a letter which I have to-day addressed to the Turkish Ambassador respecting Syria Ottoman Railway Concession. I should feel greatly obliged if you would cable the gist of it to the British Ambassador at Constantinople for communication to Mr. Ramsay, to whom I am sending a copy to-night. I inclose a suggested cable, which I have curtailed as much as possible.

I have also notified Mr. Pilling that unless he withdraws his statements to the Ambassador, and undertakes not to repeat them, I shall bring the matter before the Court.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HAROLD LAFONE,
Attorney for Mr. A. F. Hills.

Inclosure 1 in No. 72.

Mr. Lafone to Costaki Anthopoulo Pasha.

17, *Tower Royal, Cannon Street, London,*
October 17, 1901.

Excellency,

I UNDERSTAND that, in consequence of statements made by Mr. J. R. Pilling to yourself, a question has been raised at Constantinople as to Mr. Hills' title to carry on

negotiations in reference to the Syria Ottoman Railway Concession. These statements were, I am informed, to the effect:—

1. That, as Mr. Pilling holds the Firman, he and not Mr. Hills is the concessionnaire.
2. That Mr. Hills has no legal right to decide in the matter.
3. That Mr. Hills has only a secondary claim on any money received by the Company, Mr. Pilling's share of 95,000*l.* constituting a prior claim; and
4. That I accept this view.

I shall feel greatly obliged if your Excellency will inform me whether such statements have been made to you by Mr. Pilling, as in that case I must take prompt measures to put a stop to them. I have also to request you, in that case, to communicate the following contradiction at the earliest possible moment to your Government:—

1. The Firman is the property neither of Mr. Hills nor of Mr. Pilling, but of the Syria Ottoman Railway Company, to whom it was transferred by Messrs. Pilling and Elias, the original concessionnaires in 1891—as appears by clause 5 of the Company's Statutes. It has remained the Company's property ever since. If Mr. Pilling bases his claim to the Firman on the fact that in June 1894 the Company gave him a charge upon the whole of their undertaking, including the Concession, to secure certain moneys (70,000*l.*, not 95,000*l.*) then due or to become due to him from the Company, I have only to say that such a charge does not, by the English law which governs it, vest the Concession in Mr. Pilling, nor does it affect the Company's right to deal with it, and if they choose to sell it Mr. Pilling cannot object, provided that the proceeds of such sale are sufficient to pay the moneys (if any) due to him under his charge. If your Excellency will be good enough to call upon Mr. Pilling to produce his charge I think any English counsel to whom it is submitted will satisfy you that what I have stated above is correct. If further proof is necessary I may point to the fact that Mr. Pilling himself, when negotiating with your Government in regard to this Concession, has always required the Company's written authority to do so, even since the date of his charge. Mr. Pilling's charge is dated the 7th June, 1894.

2. Mr. Hills is negotiating under a power of attorney given to him by the Company for that purpose in April last, Mr. Pilling being one of the members of the Council of Administration of the Company who attested its sealing. This document empowers Mr. Hills to negotiate and settle with your Government all pending questions in relation to the Company's Concession. It can be produced at any time.

In addition, Mr. Hills was in August 1900 appointed by order of the Court here to manage and deal with the Company's property, so that his mandate is two-fold. This order of the Court can only be produced if desired.

3. As Mr. Hills is not negotiating on his own behalf but on that of the Company, it is unnecessary to discuss this point at length, but I may state that, so far as Mr. Pilling's present and personal interest in the 70,000*l.* is concerned, this has undoubtedly been postponed to Mr. Hills' claims against the Company.

4. This is absolutely untrue.

Should your Excellency require any further information I shall be happy to furnish it and would call upon you at any time if desired.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HAROLD LAFONE,
Attorney for Mr. A. F. Hills.

Inclosure 2 in No. 72.

Suggested Telegram to Mr. A. Ramsay, to be sent by Foreign Office.

INFORM Ramsay Lafone has notified Costaki that Pilling transferred Firman to Company 1891. Company charged Concession to Pilling 1894 to secure 70,000*l.* when due but charge leaves Company absolutely free to sell Concession as proposed. Lafone has warned Pilling will bring matter before Court if negotiations further interrupted. Is writing Ramsay.

No. 73.

Foreign Office to Mr. H. Lafone.

Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 19, 1901.

IN reply to your letter of the 17th instant relative to the Haifa-Damascus Railway Concession, I am directed by the Marquess of Lansdowne to inform you that a telegram in the sense suggested by you has to-day been sent to His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople.

A copy of your letter and of your communication to the Turkish Ambassador inclosed in it will be transmitted to Sir N. O'Conor.

I am, &c.
(Signed) T. H. SANDERSON.

No. 74.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 28.)

(No. 363.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 20, 1901.

IT will be remembered that at the time of the rumours of a massacre at Spaghank I suggested to the Russian Ambassador that the Russian and British Vice-Consuls at Van should accompany the Turkish Commission of Inquiry under Enver Pasha to the scene of the alleged disorders, but that the proposal fell through owing to an accident to the Russian Vice-Consul.

Acting on the lines contemplated on that occasion, I thought it well, in view of the prevalent rumours of disturbances in the Moush district, to instruct Mr. Freeman, who left Kharput on the 17th instant on his way to Bitlis, to visit Moush for a few days, where I had learned that a Russian Consular officer, whom I then understood to be the Russian Consul at Bitlis, but whom I have since ascertained to be the Russian Vice-Consul at Van, was staying. I at the same time requested Mr. Freeman to endeavour to maintain close relations with his Russian colleague and as far as possible to co-operate with him in representations to the local authorities for the better maintenance of public order in the district.

I have since received, through the Acting Vice-Consul at Van, an account of the state of affairs at Moush, from the Catholic Archbishop of that place, which, as far as regards the present situation, is reassuring in tenour.

The following is the substance of the Archbishop's information :—

Early in June a Mussulman Notable was killed by persons unknown at Moghunk, a village half-an-hour from Moush. This led to reprisals by the Mussulmans, who believed the perpetrators of the murders to be revolutionists. In these reprisals a greater part of the village was burnt. A number of the villagers are now in prison in Moush. There also occurred in various villages about this time a number of murders of Armenians, mostly during the night. It is said locally that these occurred with the connivance of the local authorities at Moush. In any case, the Mutessarif and the Vali of Bitlis, who were there, took no steps to remedy matters, a fact which confirms the opinion that these two officials are quite unfitted for their positions. The Armenians then telegraphed to Constantinople for help, and as a result of this step eight battalions of infantry were sent under the Ferik of Erzeroum. The murders ceased when news of the dispatch of troops arrived. Since their arrival things have been quiet, and the crisis may now be considered as past. The troops and the Vali of Bitlis are still at Moush as is the Russian Vice-Consul at Van. The latter is reported to have said that he will remain there until relieved by another Consul.

I should state that the Archbishop's account is confirmed in substance by information which I have received from Mr. Jones, late Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, who, when proceeding on leave, passed through Moush on his way to the coast, and also by a report from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, who states that, according to his information, though murders of Armenians have been frequent of late—Armenian estimates put the number at 120—and numbers of Armenians have been thrown into prison at Moush, nothing has been heard at Erzeroum of the wholesale massacres spoken of in the foreign press.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 75.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received October 28.)

(No. 370.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 21, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Beirut, reporting that some uneasiness has been caused in that town on account of recent disturbances between Moslems and Christians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 75.

Consul-General Drummond-Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 75.)
Sir, *Beirut, October* 1, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to report that two Moslems were attacked on the night of the 22nd September by two Christians, who killed one and wounded the other. On the following day a relative of the latter fired a revolver at an unoffending Christian seated in his shop on the Damascus road, wounding him slightly, but a woman, who happened to be in the shop at the time, was seriously wounded. This Moslem was immediately arrested, and five or six Christians belonging to the quarter where the disputes began were also seized, but the authors of the crime escaped, and are still at large.

These events led to further troubles on the 24th September in the Beirut prison, where several Moslems obtained access to the Christians' quarters and assaulted the inmates with knives, wounding five, one of whom lies in a dangerous state.

Various versions are afloat regarding this affair, but it is generally believed that the Moslems could not have entered the Christians' cells without the connivance of the gaoler. It has also been noted that the gendarmes were very slow in coming to the rescue of the Christians, and that on the same day a gaoler had inspected the latter's quarters, and confiscated all articles likely to be employed in self-defence, leaving them only with their bedding and clothes.

The Vali has dismissed two of the gaolers, and placed them under arrest to await their trial together with the offending prisoners.

These acts of insubordination and crime within the precincts of the gaol, following almost immediately after the outrages of the 22nd and 23rd September, have caused considerable uneasiness in the town, and it is feared that unless the Vali adopts severe and exemplary measures they may lead to further troubles of a more serious nature.

I have made representations to the Vali in this sense.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND-HAY.

P.S. *October 7.*—The gaolers have been tried before the Criminal Court, and only one has been sentenced to two months' imprisonment. The others were dismissed.
R. D.-H

No. 76.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 4.)

(No. 373.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 25, 1901.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 186 of the 13th May last, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting on recent Russian Consular appointments in Kurdistan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 76.

Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 13.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, October* 12, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to report that Lieutenant-Colonel Averianoff arrived here to-day to take up his duties as "Secretary" (i.e., Military Attaché) to the Russian Consulate-General, in succession to Colonel Pjevalski, who left Erzeroum about a year ago, and who has since been appointed "Chef d'État Major" to the Division stationed at Gumri (Alexandropol), in the Caucasus.

In this connection I may mention that neither of the Russian Consular appointments reported in my despatch No. 5 of the 1st May last have as yet taken effect. M. Skriabine, having declined the post assigned to him, has been appointed elsewhere, and the Consul from Konieh transferred to Kharput in his stead. He does not, however, appear to have taken up his new post, while the appointment of the Vice-Consul for Bayazid is not even yet officially gazetted.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

No. 77.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 11.)

(No. 379.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 4, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, that, owing to the failure of the harvest, general distress is expected in that district during the coming winter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 77.

Consul Barnham to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 36.)

Sir, *Aleppo, October* 21, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that, owing to the general failure of the harvest, I fear that the approaching winter will bring with it much suffering among the people, and that we shall see a state of things verging upon famine.

Within living memory there has been no such drought as has visited Northern Syria this year. The Euphrates is fordable everywhere; smaller rivers, such as the Sadjons and Kowick, are almost dry; the wells in the surrounding villages dried up in the early summer, and I have known instances where villagers have been compelled to travel 20 miles to obtain a supply of water. So it has come to pass that the harvest yielded barely sufficient for sowing the next year's crops.

Fortunately we have corn at present remaining over from last year, but we shall be compelled to draw upon other vilayets to obtain our supply during the winter. Generally speaking, we obtain corn freely from the Vilayet of Diarbekir, but apparently the same scarcity exists there, as a large order was sent last week, but the authorities would not allow its execution.

The price of wheat is to-day 135 piastres the shumbul (bushel), as against 85 piastres this time last year.

Other prices have risen as follows: flour, from 2½ to 5½ piastres; bread, from 1½ to 4 piastres; and bulghul (crushed wheat) from 1½ to 6 piastres the batman. In some places the harvest failed entirely, and the villagers have no seed for next year's crop.

The olive crop, one of our most valuable exports, is estimated to yield only a tenth of last year's output. As an instance of the failure of the crop in the Caza of Harem, I may mention that the tithes of three villages, which were sold last year for 480,000 piastres, have this year gone for 27,000 piastres.

Again I have to point to a marked increase of crime. Murders are of constant occurrence near the city, and highway robbery everywhere.

A determined attempt was made to rob the post from Aintab about ten days ago.

In connection with this and similar occurrences I would point out that those who take part in these robberies are often deserters from the army—young conscripts who, without having any natural disposition for crime, are driven to these courses as their only means of living. If an amnesty were granted to all deserters it would bring these people back to their villages and conduce to the public safety.

Many of these infest the mountains of Jebl Moussa, near the frontier of the Vilayet of Damascus.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 78.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 11.)

(No. 380.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 4, 1901.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 369 of the 20th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the arrival of the Russian Vice-Consul in Moush and on the state of affairs in that town.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 78.

Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 10.)

Sir, *Erzeroum, October* 8, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to report that M. Toumanski, the Russian Vice-Consul at Van, who left that place for Moush immediately on hearing of the dispatch of troops under Mehemed Ali Pasha, after camping for three or four days near the site of the devastated village of Moghunk, moved into a house adjoining the residence of the Gregorian Bishop of Moush, where he hoisted his flag.

Although at first assiduously surrounded with police and gendarmes, he appears to have succeeded in compelling the local authorities to allow more or less free access to him on the part of the inhabitants, and it is said that his presence there immediately produced a tranquillizing effect throughout the district, the almost daily murders of Armenians, which had hitherto constituted the most alarming feature in the situation, having at once become less frequent.

How much this may have been due to M. Toumanski's arrival and how much to the military dispositions taken at the same time by Mehemed Ali Pasha may, perhaps, be difficult to establish. What, however, is probably more directly traceable to his influence is the movement which is reported to be taking place in Moush in favour of adopting the Greek Orthodox religion, similar in nature to the abortive movement set on foot in the Erzeroum Plain and attributed to the suggestions of Colonel Prjovalski, which I reported in my despatches Nos. 2 and 5 of last year, and to the similar and equally abortive movement that took place in Alashghird after the massacres of 1895.

A Petition, bearing over 4,000 signatures, is said to have been presented to M. Toumanski, praying for admission to the Orthodox communion and the consequent protection of Russia, and, after some hesitation and an exchange of telegrams with his superiors, he is believed to have forwarded the Petition to St. Petersburgh. The Bishop of Moush, a new man only recently arrived from Constantinople, when called upon by the Turkish authorities to put a stop to this agitation, declared himself powerless in face of the practical unanimity of his flock.

The other news coming from Moush district is in general so vague and contradictory that I have not ventured on embodying it in an official despatch. I hear, however, of an attack made by Mussulmans upon the Armenian village of Garmen,

near Moush, which offered some resistance, with the result that one man was killed and several wounded on either side.

Great efforts are being made by the civil authorities of Bitlis to obtain evidence to the effect that whatever disorder has occurred has been the direct work of Armenian agitators, and I am assured that a number of villagers have been subjected to ill-treatment and even torture, under the instructions of the Alai Bey, with a view to extracting such evidence. The only specific instance, however, which has been reported to me is that of a woman of Pertag village, 5 miles from Moush, who is said to have been hung up by the heels until she died, in the endeavour to extort from her the confession that her husband was one of these agitators. Even this story I repeat with due reserve.

It is announced here that Mohemed Ali Pasha has been accorded the first class of the Osmanieh, in brilliants, in recognition of his success in preserving order, and that he will return to Erzeroum towards the end of the current month. I have much satisfaction in recording my belief that the Pasha's conduct while at Moush has justified the confidence which I ventured to express at the time of his dispatch from here.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

No. 79.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 11.)

(No. 382.)
My Lord, *Therapia, November 5, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 303 of the 14th August, my telegram No. 127 of the 14th September, and to your Lordship's despatch No. 242 of the 19th ultimo, I have the honour to report that the negotiations for the settlement of Mr. Hills' claim in connection with the Syrian-Ottoman Railway have been brought to a stand-still by Mr. Pilling's untoward intervention, and I learn that Costaki Pasha reported on the 2nd instant that Mr. Hills was expected to arrive from South Africa on the 2nd instant, and that he would see him as soon as possible.

In communicating this information to me, the Minister for Foreign Affairs said he had been charged by the Sultan to say that His Majesty desired to resume the negotiations for the conversion of the 1855 Loan, and from the proceeds of the conversion to pay the Haifa Railway claim, and with the balance buy out the French railways in Syria, so as to show that his objection was not confined to a British railway in those parts.

It is difficult to regard the Sultan's proposal otherwise than as an expedient to gain time, for His Majesty is aware that the present moment is not one in which the Cyprus Tribute Loan could be converted with any advantage to His Majesty's Government or to the Island of Cyprus.

I suggested to Tewfik Pasha that if the Imperial Government had any serious proposals to make for the conversion of the loan, it would be best to make them through their Ambassador in London.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 80.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 18.)

(No. 387.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 10, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 380 of the 4th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship extract of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting that the Armenians of Mush are said to be showing an inclination to join the Orthodox Church.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 80.

Vice-Consul Satow to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 21.)
(Extract.) *Van, October 21, 1901.*

THE rumours that the Mush Armenians are about to join the Orthodox Russian Church are confirmed from several sources, and I learn that the same opinion is prevalent in the Caucasus. It is also said there that a district near Van is ready to go over. This must be the district of Serai, which the Russian Vice-Consul visited in the spring. The principal man of the place is the Syrian Malik Safar, a very unstable man who at one time went over to the French priests. He later on came to Van, where he was in constant communication with the Russian Consulate. The Armenians in Van also show leanings towards Russia, and I believe that there are at least 1,000 prepared to join.

If once the movement is started in these parts, there seems no doubt that a large number of adherents will speedily be gained both among the Armenians and the Syrians. At Urmi in Persia the Syrians have been disappointed to find that no political advantage has been gained by a change of faith, but the relations of Russia to that district are probably considered to render such methods unnecessary. Here, however, it would seem that the presence of a considerable number of members of the Orthodox Church would furnish a very useful pretext for political interference.

It is curious to note that the Armenians who have fled to Russia are very discontented with their lot, and strongly advise their compatriots, who are still in Turkey, to stay there.

No. 81.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received November 25.)

(No. 390. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 12, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith to your Lordship a summary of the Convention which has been laid before the Imperial Government by the Anatolian Railway Company settling the main points of the Bagdad Railway Concession.

The Convention has not been definitively accepted as yet, and as I have received the information which I am able to give from a private channel, I beg that your Lordship will for the present consider it confidential.

The clauses are carefully examined in a Memorandum by Mr. Weakley, Commercial Attaché to this Embassy, which I have the honour likewise to transmit.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 81.

Summary of Convention respecting the Bagdad Railway Concession.

THE following details of the negotiations recently entered into by the "Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie" and the Ministry of Public Works, concerning the Concession of the Konia–Bagdad Railway have come to hand.

The Imperial Ottoman Government will concede to the "Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie" the Concession for the construction and the working of a railway line from Konia to Bagdad and Bussorah.

The Concession is to have a duration of ninety-nine years from the date of issue of the Firman, and this duration is to apply to the whole railway system constructed and administered by the "Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie." The line to be constructed is to be of 1·436 metres to 1·455 metres in breadth between the rails, and is to pass through or near the towns of Eregli, Adana, Hamidieh, Tel-Habesh, Harran, Ras-el-Ain, Halit, Nissibin, Tel-Avenat, Mossoul, Tekrit, Sadidjeh, Bagdad, Kerbela, Nedjef, Zobeir, and Bussorah, and will have the following branch lines:—

1. From Hamidieh to the port of Castaboli.
2. From Tel-Habesh to Aleppo.

3. From a point on the main line to be determined upon to Urfa.
4. From Sadidjeh to Hannekin.
5. From Zobeir to the port of Kázima.*
6. From Kázima to Koweit.

Should the Imperial Government at any time decide upon the construction of a railway or tramway line between the town of Aleppo and a point on the coast, the Concession for this line is to be ceded to the "Société," who will also enjoy preferential rights for the construction and working of branch lines to Marash, Aintab, Biredjik, Mardin, Erbil, from Diala to Salahieh and Turkamatli, and from El-Badj to Hit.

The "Société" is authorized to establish and work a service of navigation, either steam or sail, on the Shatt-el-Arab as well as on the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. This service is to be under the control of the Ministry of Marine, and the "Société" will be authorized to transport all the material necessary for the construction of the railway, as well as the employés and workmen engaged in the construction. This service of river navigation is to form part and parcel of the railway system, and it will enjoy the same immunities from customs duties and other taxes as are granted to the railway.

The "Société" is authorized, within the limits of the Concession, to construct ports, quays, jetties with railways, sheds, stores, &c., and will have the right of loading and discharging vessels. The expenditure entailed in the building and up-keep of these different works is to borne solely by the "Société," who will have the right of recouping such outlay from the revenue derived from these works.

The "Société" will also have the right to construct ports at Castaboli, Bussorah, and Kázima, to erect the necessary plant for mooring ships alongside the quays, and for the discharging and loading of vessels, and to erect buildings for the storage of merchandize. The plans of these ports, as well as the tariffs of the dues to be charged, must be submitted to the Ministry of Public Works, within a maximum period of eight years, and the works must be terminated in twelve years' time, dating from the time of signature of the Railway Convention.

These ports are to form part of the railway system, and their net revenues are to be included in the total net revenues of the railway. On the expiration of the railway Concession, these ports, with all their plant and buildings, will revert to the Imperial Government. Should the "Société," however, fail to build any one of these ports within the stipulated time, the Imperial Government reserves the right of granting the Concession for the construction of these ports to other parties. In any case, the Government will, during the construction of the railway, permit the "Société" to erect plant and temporary buildings at these ports for the landing and storage of railway material, but, on the completion of the railway, the Government may demand the removal of all the plant and buildings.

The Government is to take the necessary measures for the establishment of a proper and regular service of steam-boats to ply between Stamboul and Haidar-Pasha, and the "Mahsussé" Administration is to be called upon to provide three new steamers for this service, each vessel having a speed of 14 knots of 1,855 metres per knot. Should the "Mahsussé" Administration fail to carry out this arrangement within three months after the date of signature of the Railway Convention, the "Société" will have the right of establishing this steam-boat service themselves, and will have full liberty to carry passengers and goods to and from Haidar-Pasha, Sirkedji, and the Karakeuy Bridge. This right will be exercised on the condition that the captains and crews of the steam-boats are pensioned officers and men of the Imperial Navy, or are selected from amongst the students of the Imperial Naval School, and are duly provided with certificates. These boats will do duty, and take the place of those belonging to the "Mahsussé" Administration, but will be exclusively used for the special service as already defined. The "Société" undertakes to pay to the "Mahsussé" Administration a sum equal to 5 per cent. of the gross earnings of this service; the boats are to be assimilated to those of the "Mahsussé" fleet, and will enjoy equal rights and privileges.

The "Société" is to be granted authorization to work all mines which may be found within a radius of 20 kilom. on either side of the railway, and which have not already been conceded to other parties; the "Société" is also permitted to cut down any timber which may be required, from the forests found in the districts through which the line of railway is to pass.

* See "Persian Gulf Pilot," p. 159, for "Kazima" or "Káthama." Káthama is the name of a harbour in Koweit Bay. It is west of Ras Asheirig. The south side has a west-south-west direction for 5 miles from that point; it shoals gradually from 7 fathoms at the entrance, which is 4 miles broad, towards the head.

The "Société" may build stores and sheds at any point on the line which may be deemed necessary, and can erect such buildings on the land forming the property of the railway. The use of these stores and sheds is to be optional to the public, and these buildings will become the property of the Government on the expiration of the Concession. Brick and tile factories may also be established by the "Société" at any place along the line, and all the machinery and tools necessary for such factories will enter the country free of duty, and will, like railway material, be exempted from all taxation.

The authorization for the use of electricity is also granted to the "Société," and natural waterfalls and dams will be made use of, for generating electricity. The trains are to be lighted with the electric light as well as all establishments belonging to the railway. The plans and designs of these works and plant must be submitted for the approval of the Ministry of Works.

The Government undertakes, within two months' time, to hand over to the "Société," according to the laws of expropriation, any lands, quarries, &c., belonging to private individuals, which are necessary for the construction of the line, of stations, sheds, &c., but which the "Société" has been unable to acquire, owing to the impossibility of coming to terms with the proprietors. Such Crown lands as the railway will pass through, or which may be necessary for the line, will be handed over to the "Société" free of charge.

During the course of construction of the railway, the "Société" will have the free use of all quarries, &c., which are found on any Crown lands situated within a radius of 5 kilom. on either side of the line. Should the "Société" desire to continue the working of these quarries, &c., after the completion of the railway, the laws regulating the working of quarries must be observed, and the taxes fixed by these laws must be paid.

All the material, such as iron, wood, coal, machinery, &c., necessary for the construction of the railway and its branches whether purchased abroad or in Turkey, will be exempted from the payment of customs duty and all interior taxation. All the coal imported for the use of the railway will be permitted to enter the country duty free. This exemption from duty on the importation of coal will be enjoyed so long as the gross receipts of the railway lines ceded to the "Société" do not equal the sum of the kilometric guarantee.

The Convention, as well as the "Cahier de Charges," are to be free of stamp duty, and all priority shares and debentures issued by the "Société" are also to enjoy that privilege. The projected line is to be divided into ten sections of 200 kilom. each. The "Société" is expected to submit full surveys and plans of the first section of 200 kilom. to the Ministry of Public Works, eight months after the date of the issue of the firman granting the concession. A delay of eight months is to be granted in each consecutive case, for the presentation of the plans and surveys of each separate section, until the completion of the surveys of the whole line. Should the Government require certain changes and modifications in the plans and surveys which have been presented, provision is to be made for granting the "Société" ample time for making new surveys, but it is stipulated that the Government must notify its approval of the plans generally, three months after their presentation to the Department of Public Works.

The commencement of the construction of the railway is to take place three months after the date of the notification of the approval by the Government, of the plans of the first section of 200 kilom., and the "Société" undertakes to complete the whole system in twelve years counting from the same date.

Certain provisions are made in case of the stoppage, interruption, or suspension of the work of construction of the railway by circumstances of *force majeure*. This term is held to include such contingencies as European or Continental wars, as well as the fall of three points, in English, German, or French Government stock, below the market quotations of the day upon which the Convention is signed. Should the suspension of the works be brought about through any of these causes, the "Société" will, on the resumption of the work, be granted an extra delay equal to the time of such suspension. Permission will be given for throwing open to traffic the sections of the railway, which have passed Government inspection ("réception provisoire"); these sections must be at least 20 kilom. in length, and must terminate at a station.

Besides a daily ordinary service of one train per day going each way, the "Société" is expected and authorized to maintain an express train service between Haidar-Pasha and Bagdad, and an express train must be run once a week either way. In order to render this service possible, the Government undertakes to pay the "Société" the

sum of 1,000,000 fr. as its contribution towards the relaying of the Haidar-Pasha section of the railway.

The railway will, for the present, consist of a single line, but sufficient land must be required for the laying of a double line. This double line will be built at the expense of the "Société," and its construction will be insisted upon by the Government when the gross traffic receipts of the railway have attained the sum of 36,000 fr. per kilom.

New capital will have to be raised for the construction of the contemplated lines, and it is understood that the share and debenture holders of the existing lines (Haidar-Pasha–Eskishehr, Eskishehr–Angora, Eskishehr–Konia) cannot be called upon without their consent, to participate in the new enterprise, and that their acquired rights remain intact. In making the necessary arrangements for the construction and working of the new lines, the "Société" undertakes to provide for the protection of the interests of these shareholders, and will create a distinctly separate Administration for the new railway system from Konia to Bagdad.

As a guarantee of the execution of all engagements, the "Société" will deposit the sum of £T. 30,000 in a bank to be indicated by the Government. This caution-money is to be deposited on the day of issue of the Firman, and may be made either in cash or in Ottoman stock.

The withdrawal of this deposit can only be effected after the official reception of the first section of 200 kilom. of railway, and a similar sum must be deposited for every subsequent section under construction. That is to say, every section is to be considered as an independent unit of the whole line, the deposit of £T. 30,000 being only made on account of one section at a time, so that the Government can, at no period of the construction, demand the deposit of a sum greater than the caution-money agreed upon for one single section.

The Government retains the right of purchasing the whole system constructed and administered by the "Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman d'Anatolie" at any period after the first thirty years of the Concession. The purchase is to be effected by the Government by means of an annual payment equal to 50 per cent. of the average gross receipts of the five years previous to the date of purchase, such payments being conditional on the receipts of those years averaging not less than 14,000 fr. per kilom. The Government will, by a special Convention with the "Société," undertake to make the necessary arrangements for insuring the regular payments of the purchase money.

The Government guarantees the "Société" an annual net revenue of 13,000 fr. per kilom. constructed and opened to traffic. The working expenses of the main line and its branches are estimated at 50 per cent. of the annual gross receipts as a maximum, and at 4,500 fr. per kilom. per annum as the minimum figure. Should the traffic receipts per kilom. be less than the guaranteed amount, the Government undertakes to make up the deficiency. For this purpose the tithe revenues of certain Sandjaks, to be determined upon by mutual agreement, will be handed over to the Public Debt Administration for collection. The deficiency in net traffic receipts will be made up to the guaranteed figure from these revenues. All tithe revenues pledged in this manner for the whole line, or which may eventually be set aside for the guarantees of any extensions and branches of the line, are to be considered in the aggregate, as intended to insure the regular payment of the kilometric guarantees granted to the "Société." The "Société" will, however, receive no kilometric guarantee for the branch line to be built between Kaizma and Koweit. This line is to be 30 kilom. in length; it is to be built at the expense of the "Société," and the gross receipts of the line from all sources will belong to the "Société" exclusively.

As each section of the railway is opened to traffic, the receipts of all the working sections must be taken as one whole, in order to be able to strike an average of the kilometric receipts.

The formalities involved in the designation, by mutual agreement of the Sandjaks, the tithe revenues of which are to be assigned to the service of the kilometric guarantees, must be concluded within one month, at the latest, after the signing of the Convention.

The notification of the willingness of the Public Debt Administration to undertake the collection of these revenues must also be communicated to the "Société" within the same period. Should these two stipulations be not complied with within the time fixed, the "Société" is authorized to consider itself entirely freed from all the engagements it had undertaken in the Convention. The "Société" will then have the right to withdraw the caution-money of £T. 30,000, without any formality or the consent of the Government.

The "Société" will, as far as the circumstances permit, give employment by preference to Ottoman subjects; ten years after the opening of the railway all the personnel employed, with the exception of the heads of departments, must exclusively be of Ottoman nationality.

Constantinople, November 4, 1901.

Inclosure 2 in No. 81.

Memorandum by Mr. Weakley.

AS will be remembered, the Anatolian Railway Company obtained in the latter part of 1898 the final confirmation of the preferential rights which had been previously conferred on them in the Convention of the Ismidt–Angora Railway to the Concession of the Bagdad Railway, and to which was added Bussorah and Koweit, after the unsuccessful efforts made by Mr. Rechnitzer to obtain the same Concession for a London Syndicate.

The Technical Commission, which was appointed by the Anatolian Railway Company for the drawing up of the preliminary surveys, and to study the economic possibilities of the districts through which the railway would pass, left Constantinople in the autumn of 1899, and terminated its labours in March of the following year.

Copies of the Reports drawn up by that Commission have been obtained, and we are in possession of the views held by that Commission as to the present state of the country, the advantages which it would reap from the construction of the contemplated line, and the benefits which capitalists might expect, under the most advantageous circumstances, in the event of their participation in the enterprise.

The question which has been lying dormant for nearly a year has been revived, and about the month of September last negotiations were reopened with the Turkish Government for drawing up the Convention of the projected railway. The Company had, it appears, decided upon making a point on the lower reaches of the Shatt-el-Arab, near Fao, the terminus of the line, in preference to Koweit, and it is supposed that this alteration of the original plan was due to the questioned right of sovereignty of the Turkish Government over Koweit and district. It is reported that, owing to an appeal made by the Sultan to Berlin, the Company has reconsidered their former decision, and has notified the Ministry of Public Works that Koweit will be included in the railway scheme, and will form one of the termini of the line on the Persian Gulf.

Negotiations have been very actively conducted both at the Palace and at the Ministry of Works for the conclusion of the new Convention, Dr. Zander, one of the Directors of the Anatolian Railway, having been the chief negociator on behalf of the Company. These negotiations, it is reported, are now in an advanced stage, but have been suspended by the sudden departure of Dr. Zander, who was called to Berlin on the death of Dr. von Siemens, of the Deutsche Bank. The information privately obtained, and which is embodied in the inclosed document, gives a fair insight of the nature of these negotiations.

It will be observed that the Concession to be granted is a most comprehensive one, and, with the railway system at present administered by the Anatolian Company, will give that Company a monopoly of all railways in Asia Minor outside the zone claimed by the Russian Government as coming exclusively under their sphere of influence.

The scheme, if carried through, is one which, with the incorporation of the Smyrna–Cassaba system, and the independent lines already ceded to the French in Northern Syria, will practically close the country to all future demands for Railway Concessions. Whilst, in all probability, seriously affecting the position of the Smyrna–Aidin Railway, it will put an end to the existence of the Mersina–Adana Railway as an independent concern, and the proprietors will be compelled to accept such terms of purchase as the Anatolian Company may offer them.

The main and branch lines are to be completed in twelve years, counting from the date of the issue of the Firman; but the possibilities of this period being exceeded, through the inability of the concessionnaires to raise the necessary capital, and other causes, has been foreseen by the insertion in the Convention of a saving clause, which stipulates that should the work of construction be at any time suspended by circumstances of *force majeure*, a period of time will be granted the Company, equal to the

duration of the interruption of the work, over and above the twelve years allowed for completion.

Amongst the circumstances which may, without question, prevent the obtention of capital, and which may in many ways make the cessation of all work on the line imperative for an indefinite period, is the outbreak of European or continental wars: a contingency which has been included in the term *force majeure*. Another circumstance which has also been included under that heading is, that should English, German, or French Government stock decline three points below the market quotations of the day upon which the Convention is signed, it will be considered a sufficient reason for suspending the work of construction. This condition will allow of the assumption that it is the intention of the Company to establish for itself an almost perpetual right to the whole Concession in the event of circumstances, financial or otherwise, determining the abandonment of the construction of some part of the system, as defined in the Convention.

The Government is to guarantee the Company a net annual revenue of 13,000 fr. per kilometre, and the tithe revenues of certain Sandjaks, which are to be designated later on, are to be set aside for the regular payment of the guaranteed amount. It is especially stipulated that the branch line from Kâzima or Kâthama (a point on the Bay of Koweit) to Koweit itself, a line of about 20 kilom. in length, will not, however, enjoy any guaranteed revenue.

The working expenses of the whole line are to be fixed at 50 per cent. of the gross traffic receipts as a maximum expenditure, and 4,500 fr. per kilometre as the minimum.

The Concession is to comprise the enjoyment of privileges of a most exceptional and extensive character, the most important of which are:—

1. Preferential rights for the construction of branch lines of secondary importance.

2. The building of ports at Castaholi, Bussorah, and Kâzima, and the right of levying port and quay dues on merchandize.

3. The right to work all mines found within a radius of 20 kilom. on either side of the railway, and which may not have been otherwise conceded.

4. The establishment of a steam-boat service for the carrying of passengers and merchandize to and from Stamboul and Haidar-Pasha, and which will replace the service now undertaken by the "Mahsussé" Administration.

5. The liberty to establish a service of steam or sail on the Shatt-el-Arab, the Tigris, and the Euphrates. It is to be presumed that the "Hamidié" service of boats now run on the Shatt-el-Arab and Tigris by the Turkish Government will be made over to the German Company, who will enjoy all the rights and privileges granted to the "Hamidié" Administration.

It is difficult to believe that when the draft of this Convention is submitted to the Council of Ministers it will be accepted without very serious modifications, for the scheme, as it at present stands, practically means the handing over to the German Company and its supporters the future development, in the fullest sense, of the immense tract of country through which it is intended to carry the railway.

Constantinople, November 12, 1901.

No. 82.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received November* 18.)

(No. 391.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, November 12, 1901.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 362 of the 6th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting continued fighting among the Kurdish tribes in that vilayet.

Captain Anderson also alludes to the rumours current in Diarbekir as to the tendency of the Armenians of Mush to join the Orthodox Church.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 82.

Vice-Consul Anderson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 28.)
Sir,

Diarbekir, October 22, 1901.

WITH regard to current events in this vilayet, and in continuation of the subject of Mr. Freeman's despatch No. 24, I have the honour to report as follows:—

A letter from Jezireh, dated the 14th October, gives the following information, which may, I think, be considered reliable.

Two Chaldean villages, Wahsad and Telkabin, which are in Muhammad Agha-i-Sor's territory, were lately plundered and burned by Mustapha Pasha. Agha-i-Sor wished to rebuild them, but was prevented from doing so by Mustapha Pasha. Three other Christian villages, Tahkin, Gergibedro, and Nehrwan, are now occupied by Mustapha Pasha, Muhammad Agha, chief of the Batwan tribe, Reshid Agha, of the Tayyan Arabs, with his brother Haji Agha, and a Kurd, Kadri Beg, with their men; they have collected the tithes of these villages, though they have already been once collected by the Government. Fighting has begun between Mustapha Pasha and Agha-i-Sor.

On the evening of the 19th instant his Excellency the Vali went to the telegraph office, where he remained for four hours. It appears that in the fighting between Agha-i-Sor and Mustapha Pasha with his allies, the latter was defeated with a loss of about 100 men killed. After his defeat he went to the Kaïmakam of Jezireh, and demanded the aid of the regular troops quartered in the town. This the Kaïmakam refused, saying that he had nothing to do with the Kurd quarrels, and that they must fight it out among themselves. Mustapha Pasha thereupon struck the Kaïmakam, and drove him, together with the other officials out of the town. They are now in the Jacobite village of Hazakh near Jezireh. This affair was the cause of his Excellency the Vali's long visit to the telegraph office. He immediately, i.e., at midnight, dispatched Azim Bey, Binbashi of Gendarmerie, to act temporarily as Kaïmakam at Jezireh, with orders to arrest, if possible, Mustapha Pasha and his son-in-law, Tahir Agha, and bring them to Mardin.

The Chaldean Bishop here has just received a letter, dated the 6th October, from a Chaldean priest at Jezireh, saying that on the 2nd instant, he, together with the head of each Christian community, and the leading Moslem Imams, was summoned by Tahir Agha, and forced by threats to sign a "mazbata" against his Excellency the Vali, addressed to the German Ambassador at Constantinople. The letter goes on to describe the abject state of subjection of the Christians, and the powerlessness of the Government. The writer concludes by saying that he is willing, anywhere outside Jezireh, to disown his signature to the "mazbata," and to express his real opinions.

There have been various rumours here regarding the tendency of the Armenians of Mush to join the Russian Orthodox Church. An Armenian priest of Farkin, in the kaza of Silivan, of this vilayet, lately wrote to his co-religionists in Mush to ask if it were true that all the Armenians were joining the Orthodox Church; if so, he too wished to join them. The contents of this letter came to the knowledge of the Mutessarif of Mush, who reported by telegraph to the Government in Constantinople, who telegraphed instructions in cypher to his Excellency the Vali here to have the priest arrested. This was done on the 14th instant, and his papers sent here for examination.

I am informed that on the 14th instant fighting took place south of Urfa, between the Shammar and Umes Arabs; the latter were defeated and 3,000 of Ibrahim Pasha's men, who had been sent to assist them, arrived upon the scene too late to take any part in the combat.

On the 17th instant the civil officials here telegraphed jointly to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan that they had received no pay for four, and in some cases, for five months, and prayed that they might receive what is due to them. The constant calls for money from Constantinople cause a scarcity of cash, which makes it inevitable that the salaries of the officials should be in arrears.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. J. ANDERSON.

No. 83.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received November 25.*)

(No. 397.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 18, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 370 of the 21st ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copies of further despatches from His Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, reporting on the troubles between Moslems and Christians in that city.

I have informed Mr. Drummond-Hay that I approve of the representations he has made to the Vali on the subject, as reported in his despatch No. 80 of the 30th ultimo.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure 1 in No. 83.

Consul-General Drummond-Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 80.)
Sir, *Beirout, October 30, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that the troubles in Beirout between Moslems and Christians, reported in my despatch No. 75 of the 1st October, were followed by further acts of violence committed on the highways and in the public thoroughfares of the town.

The most serious case occurred on the Damascus road, between the Beirout and Lebanon frontier guard-houses, on the 24th October, when Hassan Bey, Inspector of Passports of the Custom-house, a certain Abu Nasser, and a traveller from Tripoli, all Moslems, returning from an evening drive, were attacked by three unknown persons, who emptied the contents of their revolvers on the occupants of the carriage, killing the stranger and wounding the others. Hassan Bey received three shots in different parts of the body, but, fortunately, none of them are mortal.

On the two following days, four Christians were assaulted and stabbed in different parts of the town, one of whom died from his wounds on the 26th instant; and again, on the 28th instant, revolver shots were exchanged between a Moslem and a Christian, when the former was wounded.

The persons who attacked Hassan Bey are believed by the police to be Christians, and suspicion has fallen on a smuggler, named Ghaudour Izraïk, who was seen in the neighbourhood of the Damascus road that day. Several of his relatives have been seized; but, up to the present, the police have not secured any of the real offenders, whether Moslem or Christian.

I called yesterday on the Vali and made serious representations on the unsatisfactory state of the town. His Excellency, who was absent on a tour of inspection in the interior when the Damascus road affair took place, informed me that, on the receipt of the news, he immediately returned to Beirout, and took every possible precaution for the preservation of public order by increasing the patrols and visiting personally those quarters of the town where the excitement prevailed. He also summoned from Acre an energetic gendarme officer in whom he has full confidence.

I pointed out to his Excellency the fact that these periodical outbreaks of troubles between Christians and Moslems in Beirout had been hitherto confined to the lowest classes, and that the culprits, who had been invariably allowed to escape unpunished, are now menacing the public peace and the safety of respectable and unoffending persons.

A deputation of Christian and Moslem Notables waited on the Vali to-day, and submitted to him a Memorial regarding the unsatisfactory state of things, and it is reported that they subsequently telegraphed to the Palace, begging that capital punishment may be inflicted on murderers instead of imprisonment.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND-HAY

Inclosure 2 in No. 83.

Consul-General Drummond-Hay to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 83.)
Sir, *Beirout, November 6, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 80 of the 30th October, I have the honour to report that the Vali of Beirout at first forbade the dispatch of the telegram which the deputation of Notables proposed to send to the Sultan. The members of the deputation met again, and, having slightly modified their telegram, they gave his Excellency, indirectly, to understand that, if they were prevented from sending it, they had arranged to dispatch it, with a complaint against himself, from Damascus, Cyprus, or some other place outside his jurisdiction.

The telegram was then allowed to go, praying for stringent orders for the punishment of murderers according to the Sacred Law, and ending with the words, "owing to numerous events in our town, we have no security."

This incident has increased the unpopularity of Reshid Bey, especially with the Moslems, and I understand that he himself, feeling the difficulty of administering a province where he has so many enemies, has telegraphed to the Sultan, asking to be transferred to another post, giving as his reason his objection to reside longer in a town where so few persons share his feelings of loyalty and devotion to His Majesty the Sultan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND-HAY.

No. 84.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received November 25.*)

(No. 399.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 18, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus reporting a claim of the Syrian Jacobite community of Homs for the restitution to them of four churches and a convent now in possession of their rivals the Syrian Catholics.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

Inclosure in No. 84.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 64.)
Sir, *Damascus, October 22, 1901.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that I received a visit, not long since, from Mgr. Butros, the Syrian Jacobite Bishop of Homs, who has been staying in Damascus for the last month, and who informed me that he wished to speak to me on a subject in which he and his community are very deeply interested. He then proceeded to explain that he had come here for the purpose of seeing the Vali and representing to him the injustice of which he and his flock are the victims in that they have been deprived by their rivals the Syrian Catholics of four churches and one convent, all situated in this city and district.

It would appear that about seventy years ago a movement began in favour of Roman Catholicism among the chief "Jacobite," or "Old," Syrian families of Damascus and Rasheya, a small town lying at the foot of the northern slopes of Mount Hermon. The converts in this city used, as a rule, to attend the services held by the Franciscan monks, but, occasionally, they would go to their old "Jacobite" church. Those who remained true to their old faith, whose numbers, as time went on, were continually dwindling, appear to have resented the spasmodic reappearance in their churches of those whom they considered as perverts, and from time to time they would drive them out. At length Mutran Yacoub, the Jacobite Bishop of Damascus, who subsequently took the name of Gregorios, was himself converted to Catholicism and carried along with him a

considerable number of his flock, so that there remained only a few representative members of the old Jacobite community. This being so, the Syrian Catholics, with the Bishop at their head, appropriated for their own use with their new rites the church—known as Mar Mousa—in which they had formerly worshipped as Jacobites, their ci-devant co-religionists, now reduced to a very small number, being left without a church. I might mention here that the Jacobite Bishop of Nebk, Mutran Metta, was also converted to Roman Catholicism at about this time.

The movement towards Rome which I have described as taking place in Damascus and Rasheya, appears soon afterwards to have spread to other places, of which the principal were Nebk and Kuryetein, to the north, and Kala'at Jendel, to the south-west of Damascus, with the same results, viz., that the newly converted Syrian Catholics of those villages took possession of what had been Jacobite churches, in the case of Nebk and Kuryetein, and of the Jacobite convent in the case of Kala'at Jendel. It is the restitution of those four churches and one convent for which the Jacobite Bishop is now suing.

The conversion of Bishop Gregorios took place in the year 1829 or 1830.

In 1832, when Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt occupied Syria, the same freedom in the exercise of their religion was accorded to Catholics as was already enjoyed by other Christians, the consequence of which was that the members of the recently converted Syrian community remained true to the faith which they now professed.

In 1840 the Jacobite Bishop (subsequently Patriarch), Mgr. Butros, went to Constantinople to petition the Sultan for the restitution of the churches and convent, of which they had been deprived. He was followed, in 1841, by the Syrian Catholic Bishop of Damascus, Mgr. Gregorios, who did all he could to confute the arguments of his rival, in which he succeeded to a certain extent, after a delay of several years, for he obtained a Firman from the Sultan, dated Rabi'-ul-akhir, 1263 (1847), the gist of which was that all churches and convents of which the ownership was disputed should remain in the possession of those communities which then enjoyed the use of them until the matter could be inquired into and settled by the Council of State. Finding that he had not gained his point, the Jacobite Bishop left the capital with such precipitation that his departure is described by his religious opponents as "flight." The Jacobite explanation of this incident is that their Bishop, having at length realized that the Syrian Catholic cause being warmly championed by the French Ambassador, it was useless for him to continue to "kick against the pricks," decided, somewhat abruptly, to leave the scene of the conflict.

In the year 1876 the Jacobites made a further appeal to the Sultan (the reigning Sovereign) in this matter, and after some delay and discussion succeeded in obtaining a Firman, dated the 21st Rejeb, 1293 (1876), the tenour of which was practically the same as that of the previous document, viz., that in view of the fact that this dispute between the rival sects was of long standing, it could only be settled by the Council of State.

This was not done, however, nor does it appear that any further steps were taken.

For some of this information I am indebted to Mgr. Michail Bakhkhash, the Syrian Catholic Bishop of this city and district, who has also been to see me and talk about the matter, so that I have heard both sides.

M. Michail does not deny that the four churches and one convent enumerated above did originally belong to the Jacobite community, but he maintains that when Bishop Gregorios (Mutran Yacoub) was converted to Roman Catholicism in 1830 he practically took the whole of his flock with him, and that of the few Jacobite families which remained true to their faith there is no longer a single representative resident in Damascus. This is denied by Bishop Butros (the Jacobite), who asserts that there are here still a few of the original Jacobite families. If so, they must be very few indeed, for of the 150 (about) Jacobites now living here it is a well-known fact that the very great majority are strangers, mostly from Mardin, and other parts of Mesopotamia.

The Jacobite population of Kuryetein is put by Bishop Butros at 400 souls, that of Nebk at 50 souls (they have no priest at present), while at Rasheya and Kala'at Jendel there are, by Bishop Butros' own admission, no Jacobites at all.

I am informed that the Vali, after hearing Bishop Butros' statement, was inclined to side with him in this discussion, but that subsequently, after hearing what the Syrian Catholic Bishop had to say on the subject, he changed his mind, and was inclined to believe that the latter was in the right.

However, the matter has been referred to Constantinople, where the Jacobite Patriarch, Mgr. Abdul Messih, is now pleading the cause of his community with the Porte.

I should add, in conclusion, that Turkish official statistics give the number of Syrian Catholics residing in this vilayet as 1,814 souls, whereas the number of Syrian Jacobites, according to the same authority, is 5,025 souls. In each case a number amounting to one-third of these figures may fairly be added, as official census calculations in this country are, for obvious reasons, always considerably below the truth.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 85.

Sir N. O'Conor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received November 25.*)

(No. 409.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 20, 1901.*

BEFORE the audience which I had the honour of having last night with the Sultan, the Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me that he was authorized by His Imperial Majesty to inform me officially that the instalments now due on account of the cruiser ordered from Messrs. Armstrong last May, and in which, as your Lordship is aware, are included in the claims of British subjects arising out of the Armenian disturbances in 1896, would be paid from the advance of 600,000*l.*, which the Ottoman Bank was about to make to the Imperial Government, and that if the Bank made difficulties in appropriating any part of the loan to this purpose, the money would be paid from other sources without delay.

At the same time he was instructed by His Imperial Majesty to express his sincere thanks for the way in which I had treated this question, and for the consideration I had shown in view of the condition of the Public Treasury.

His Majesty, who was pleased to entertain me at dinner, received me afterwards in a long audience in the ante-room of his box in the theatre, and I took the opportunity to thank His Majesty, on behalf of my Government, for the satisfactory communication he had just made to me through his Minister for Foreign Affairs. I said that it was a great pleasure to me to be able to report to your Lordship that this matter was settled, and that I had full confidence in His Imperial promise.

His Majesty replied that he was anxious that this question should be arranged before I left, and that he had given positive orders for the payment of the money.

I have every reason to expect that the assurances given to me last night by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and confirmed by the Sultan, will be carried out. An Imperial Iradé has been issued sanctioning the loan, which the Imperial Ottoman Bank seems disposed to make, and setting apart the amount due to Messrs. Armstrong. A copy of the Iradé on this latter point has been communicated to Mr. Block by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who has also promised to write and inform me of its issue, while repeating his assurances that the money will be paid.

I cannot, of course, regard the matter as absolutely settled until the money has been paid, but I think the payment is as sure as anything ever is in this country.

The Minister is particularly anxious that the arrangement sanctioned by the Sultan should be kept secret, at all events for the present, so as to prevent the possibility of the French or other claimants protesting against its execution in virtue of what they may possibly consider to be prior claims. I promised that if there should be any indiscretion committed in this respect, it would not be our fault.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 86.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received December 2.*)

(No. 418.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 23, 1901.*

ACCORDING to a telegram dispatched yesterday from Mr. Vice-Consul Freeman at Moush, some thirty revolutionists had taken refuge in the Arakh Monastery, in the neighbourhood of Moush, and were besieged by Turkish troops. Mr. Freeman, who, in

the company of the Russian Consular officer now at Moush, had visited the spot, states that at the time of telegraphing one soldier had been killed and one wounded, but that the troops had withheld their fire owing to the presence of children within the monastery.

Mr. Freeman adds that the Christian quarters (presumably of Moush) are being patrolled for fear of a Mussulman outbreak.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 87.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 2.)

(No. 420.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 26, 1901.*

WITH reference to my telegram of to-day, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting on the recent earthquake at that place.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 87.

Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 15.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, November 15, 1901.*

ON the morning of the 8th instant an earthquake occurred in this district, which caused very considerable damage in the city and a complete panic amongst the native population. Shocks of less violence have continued to be felt, at more or less frequent intervals, up to the present time, but, as no material damage has been reported since the first day, it may be hoped that the worst is now known.

According to a corrected estimate, furnished this morning by his Excellency the Vali, eighteen Mussulmans and three Christians (a woman and two children) were killed and four persons severely injured. About 100 houses of the poorer sort were completely destroyed, and some 400 others rendered unsafe for habitation. Throughout the entire city there remains scarcely one building of which more than the ground floor can be considered fit for occupation until thoroughly repaired, and no repairs can be undertaken before next spring. The Government Offices, the private residence of the Vali, the Gregorian Armenian, Greek Orthodox, and Latin churches are amongst those which have suffered essential structural injuries, the Gregorian church in particular being in an extremely dangerous condition.

Practically the entire population of the city has now been living for a whole week in the streets and open spaces, under tents or other hastily-improvised shelters. A very similar seismic disturbance which occurred in 1859—within the recollection, that is, of a large proportion of the inhabitants—continued for forty days, and, until an equal period has elapsed, it is probable that few will be induced to return to their abandoned dwellings, and to those who have any idea of the intensity of the winter cold at an elevation of more than 6,000 feet above sea-level it is scarcely necessary to explain that existence under such conditions can hardly be so long continued without the most serious effects upon the public health.

Four Relief Committees are now at work, under the direction of the Vali, to meet the more immediate necessities of the case. Wooden barracks, capable of sheltering nearly 3,000 people, have already been erected, and more are in course of construction, though the local stocks of timber are approaching exhaustion. 4,000 okes (100 cwt.) of bread are being daily distributed to the necessitous, besides tea, sugar, and fuel. It must be remembered that the population of Erzeroum has been of late years very much impoverished, and contains also an abnormal proportion of widows and orphans.

It is estimated that, to tide over the winter and assist the poorer classes to rebuild their ruined dwellings in the spring, at least 10,000*l.* will be required. Towards this amount 1,000*l.* has been locally subscribed, 1,500*l.* promised by the Ministry of Finance, and 1,000 borrowed from the Agricultural Bank, leaving at least 6,500*l.* yet to be provided. A further severe shock of earthquake or a serious epidemic, neither of which can be regarded as an improbable contingency, would enormously increase the necessities of the case.

This is scarcely a time when large subscriptions can be expected from the British public; nevertheless, I venture to hope that, if your Excellency should think fit to give immediate publicity to the facts, some of those at least who are specially interested in Armenia might be induced to contribute, and I need hardly say that I should be very glad to receive any contributions and endeavour to see that they were properly administered.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

No. 88.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 2.)

(No. 421.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 26, 1901.*

WITH reference to Sir N. O'Conor's No. 369 of the 20th ultimo, I have the honour to report that Mr. Freeman has now concluded his visit to Moush and has proceeded to Bitlis. The Russian Vice-Consul, of whose presence at Moush your Lordship was informed by Sir N. O'Conor, has also left that place and is now at Bitlis, presumably on his way back to his post at Van.

It will be remembered that according to intelligence received by Mr. Satow at Van, the disorders reported to have occurred in the Moush district were in the nature of reprisals for the murder of a Mussulman Notable, which was alleged to have been the work of revolutionists.

It now appears, from information obtained by Mr. Freeman, that the Mussulman Notable referred to, Sherif Agha by name, was murdered by, or at the instigation of, an Armenian girl whom he had violated.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 89.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 2.)

(No. 423.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 26, 1901.*

IN continuation of Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 390, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship a further Memorandum prepared by Mr. Weakley respecting the Bagdad Railway negotiations.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 89.

Memorandum by Mr. Weakley.

WITH reference to my previous Memorandum respecting the recent negotiations which have been carried on by the Anatolian Railway Company, for the conclusion of the Convention of the Bagdad Railway Concession, I have now to report that Dr. Zander having arrived from Berlin early last week, the negotiations were resumed, and have finally been concluded, and the Articles of the Convention having been initialled, this document was submitted to the Palace on Saturday evening, the 23rd instant, for Imperial sanction.

A very important amendment has been made in the Convention, with regard to the kilometric guarantees and the working expenses of the projected line, which are to be paid by Government.

The use of the words "kilometric guarantees" has been carefully avoided, and the arrangement now arrived at provides that the Government is to guarantee the Company the payment of an "annuity" of 12,500 fr. per kilom., constructed and opened to traffic, and the Government equally guarantees the payment to the Company of 4,500 fr. per annum for the working expenses of every kilometre opened to traffic. Should the gross traffic receipts of the line exceed the sum of 4,500 fr. per kilom., the total amount of such excess receipts, up to the sum of 10,000 fr., is to revert entirely to the Government, but any receipts over and above the sum of the 10,000 fr. already mentioned are to be divided between the Government and the Company, 75 per cent. going to the former, and the latter obtaining 25 per cent. It is stipulated that the amounts reverting to the Government from such traffic receipts are to be held by the Company as a guarantee for the payment of the annuity, and the Company is to hand over all such surplus revenues as may be due to the Government, only after the entire payment of the annuity has been made to the Company.

The means to be taken for assuring the payment of any deficit which may arise, in the event of the gross traffic receipts not attaining the sum of 4,500 fr. per kilom., as well as of the guaranteed annuity, are to be considered and to be decided upon by common agreement later on. The payment of the annuities is to be made through the Public Debt Administration, and it is to be noted that no particular revenues have been specified in this amendment, as being put aside for the service of the guarantees.

Besides the ordinary "trains mixtes," the Company is to organize a through train service to Aleppo from Haidar-Pasha and *vice versâ*, running once a week; these trains will also keep up a fortnightly service between Haidar-Pasha and the Persian Gulf.

The average speed of these trains, for the first ten years after the opening of the whole line, is fixed at 40 kilom. per hour, including stoppages; this speed is to be increased to 55 kilom. per hour, after the first ten years.

I am informed that at the last moment it was decided to abandon the branch line from Kazima to Koweit, but this information will have to be confirmed later on.

(Signed) ERNEST WEAKLEY.

Constantinople, November 25, 1901.

No. 90.

Mr. Buchanan to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 2.)

(No. 278.)

My Lord, *Berlin, November* 28, 1901.

A PLENARY meeting of the German Holy Land Association ("Verein vom Heiligen Lande") was recently held in Münster, various personages holding high official rank in Westphalia being present.

After a discussion had taken place on the questions of the construction of a church to the Virgin Mary on Zion, for which the sum of some 30,000*l.* had been set aside, and the establishment of a new German hospice at the Damascus Gate, which should contain accommodation largely in excess of the present one at the Jaffa Gate, a communication was made to the assembly that the Imperial Chancellor had lately taken steps at Constantinople on behalf of the Franciscans, who were suffering at the hands of the Greeks in Jerusalem. This announcement was received with enthusiasm by the meeting, and it was declared that the protection and care exercised by the German Emperor over the German Roman Catholics in the East rendered the protectorate of a foreign Power unnecessary, and that such was neither desired nor sought by the Germans in those parts.

I have, &c.

(Signed) GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

No. 91.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 9.)

(No. 425.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 28, 1901.

WITH reference to Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 397 of the 18th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a further despatch from His Majesty's Consul-General at Beyrout, reporting that the condition of the town has improved.

I have, &c.

(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 91.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Mr. de Bunsen.

(No. 87.)

Sir, *Beyrout, November* 15, 1901.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 83 of the 6th November, I have the honour to report that, on receipt of the telegram from the inhabitants of Beyrout, instructions were sent from the Palace to the Vali to exert all his abilities for the maintenance of order and the punishment of persons offending against the public peace.

His Excellency is instructed to dismiss at once any minor official guilty of negligence in maintaining order, and in the case of higher officials, to suspend them and report to Constantinople.

These instructions were communicated by the Vali to some of the leading inhabitants, Christian and Moslem, who, acting on hints given by the authorities, have prepared a telegram to the Sultan expressing their thanks for the instructions, and satisfaction with the steps taken by the Vali, and the perfect tranquillity now reigning in Beyrout.

I beg to state that the last paragraph of this message is somewhat premature, as another murder of a Mussulman by a Christian has occurred in the last few days, which will probably be followed by some act of retaliation; but the state of the town has improved, and if the Vali faithfully executes his orders, I hope that normal conditions may soon prevail.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

P.S. *November* 18.—Since writing the above, I learn that a disturbance occurred in the Serai on the night of the 16th instant, when the Christian accused of the last murder had been lodged in the guard-room. Some prisoners rushed out of the other guard-room, where Moslems are placed, and one of them attacked the man with a knife, wounding him in two places, but not severely. The guards intervened in time to prevent further bloodshed, and separated the parties.

On hearing of this I called on the Vali and made strong representations on the matter, pointing out that the authorities were directly responsible for the maintenance of order in their prisons and guard-houses.

His Excellency assured me that the culprits had at once been put into irons, and would be severely dealt with, adding that such an incident had never before occurred in the guard-house.

R. D. H.

No. 92.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 9.)

(No. 426.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 29, 1901.*

WITH reference to Sir N. O'Conor's despatches No. 380 and No. 387 of the 4th and 12th instant respectively, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship the accompanying copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting that, according to information obtained by Mr. Freeman while at Moush, the Russian Government has declined to entertain the Petition from the Armenians of that town for admission to the Greek Orthodox Church.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 92.

Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 16.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, November 18, 1901.*

IN reference to my despatch No. 10 of the 8th ultimo, I am informed by Mr. Vice-Consul Freeman that the number of Moush Armenians who signed the Petition for admission into the Greek Orthodox Church was about 2,800, instead of 4,000, as was reported here. It is possible that even the lower figure is an exaggeration, since it is asserted that all the signatories were inhabitants of Moush town, which contains only some 1,500 Armenian families.

According to Mr. Freeman's information, the Russian Government has intimated that the Petition cannot be entertained.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

No. 93.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 23.)

(No. 433.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 5, 1901.*

MY attention having been called to a paragraph in the "Terjuman-i-Hakikat" of the 9th instant, stating that owing to losses incurred by the Turkish line of steamers on the Tigris in consequence of the competition of the British line, the Ottoman Minister of Marine had represented to the Sublime Porte the necessity of taking steps to suspend the service of the latter, I asked Tewfik Pasha this afternoon whether there was any truth in this statement.

His Excellency assured me that he had heard nothing of the matter, and that he was not aware of any intention to interfere with the privileges secured to Messrs. Lynch by Imperial Firman.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 94.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 16.)

(No. 434.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 8, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 417 of the 24th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Jerusalem reporting further on the affray between Greek and Latin monks near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 94.

Consul Dickson to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 66.)
Sir, *Jerusalem, November 19, 1901.*

WITH reference to my telegrams of the 13th instant and of yesterday's date, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Mutessarif of Jerusalem ordered that a strict inquiry should take place relative to the late incident between Latins and Greeks, so that the culprits in the affair might be discovered and punished. To do this, however, it was necessary that the wounded on both sides should be interrogated by the police and judicial authorities, and as there were among the Latin monks, who had received injuries, persons of different nationalities, I understand that my colleagues of Italy, Russia, and Germany considered that delegates from their Consulates should be present at the investigation, as in the case of ordinary foreign subjects. The Acting French Consul-General, nevertheless, declined to accede to any proposal to hold an inquiry, or to allow access by the authorities for this purpose to the Franciscan Monastery, where the wounded monks were lying. I am also informed that M. Wiet telegraphed to his Government for instructions, but until now he does not seem to have received any reply as to what steps he should take in the matter.

The Mutessarif of Jerusalem has, notwithstanding, proceeded, as far as possible, with the necessary investigation, and the statements of the wounded Greek monks, of whom there are several lying in the Greek hospital, have been taken down. The police also have been able to obtain information which has resulted in the arrest of six or seven natives, members of the Greek Orthodox Church. Until further action, however, is taken by France the matter remains at a standstill.

As regards the right of the Latins to sweep a portion of the floor in front of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which was the occasion of the quarrel, the question will have eventually to be decided between the French and Turkish authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN DICKSON.

No. 95.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(Received December 16.)

(No. 435.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 8, 1901.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 420 of the 26th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copies of despatches from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, giving his observations on the damage caused by the recent earthquake in that city, and on the progress of relief operations.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 95.

Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 17.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, November 22, 1901.*

THE Commissions appointed by the Vali for that purpose having now completed their examination of the city, estimate the damage done by the recent earthquake at something over £ T. 100,000.

The greater part of this, however, being distributed over different administrations and house-owners of a class which will not come within the scope of relief operations, their estimate of the sum that will be required in aid is not much in excess of that quoted in my previous report upon this subject, *i.e.*, some £ T. 12,000 or £ T. 13,000.

Slight shocks of earthquake still continue to be felt at frequent intervals, but have done no further damage.

The reports that were at first in circulation here as to destruction in other parts of the vilayet have proved to be without foundation. Some little damage was done in four or five villages in the immediate vicinity of the town, but, I believe, nowhere else in this province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

Inclosure 2 in No. 95.

Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 20.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, December* 1, 1901.

IT is officially stated that up to the 27th ultimo the following amounts had been subscribed for the relief of the sufferers by the recent earthquakes in Erzeroum :—

	£ T.
Collected in Erzeroum itself	1,354
„ Baibourt..	200
„ Erzinghian	830
„ Trebizonde	625
Promised from His Imperial Majesty's Privy Purse	2,500
Borrowed, by authorization of Finance Ministry, from the Agricultural Bank ..	1,000
Taken, as above, from revenues of the Forest Department	500
Total	7,009

This is independent of sums collected by the Central Relief Commission in Constantinople, but apparently not yet remitted.

The number of persons in receipt of bread rations has been gradually reduced, as the population has returned to its normal avocations, from over 12,000 on the first day to something less than 4,000 to-day, at which figure it is likely to remain for the rest of the winter.

The daily ration being half-an-oke (22 ounces) per head, and the bread being issued from the military bakeries at a cost of about 15 paras per oke, the expenditure under this head is less than £ T. 230 per month, and if £ T. 2,000 is set aside for food distribution (including a small amount of tea and sugar, which is also being issued), ample provision will have been made.

I have no estimate of the amount already expended on the erection of wooden shelters for the homeless. All of this, however, is not lost, since much of the timber employed will be available for reconstruction purposes in the spring.

The six Technical Commissions appointed by the Vali for this purpose have, as I reported on the 22nd ultimo, completed their general survey of the town, but they are now engaged on a systematic house-to-house visitation of their respective sections, with a view to establishing with greater exactitude the amount of expenditure required in each. The total may probably exceed by a good deal the provisional estimate, but much, of course, will depend upon the latitude of interpretation given to the word "necessitous," and this again must needs be dependent on the amount of money available for grants in aid. Many of the relatively "well-to-do," whose capital is invested in house property, will be almost as much in need of assistance as the absolutely poor.

There will remain also the question of public buildings. I am assured that the Armenian Cathedral alone will require a minimum expenditure of £ T. 3,000 or £ T. 4,000 before it can be reopened for public worship.

Three or four shocks of earthquake, one of which was fairly sharp, were felt again last night, and considerable further damage has been done by heavy rain—an almost unprecedented phenomenon at this season of the year. Most of the better-class inhabitants, however, have now returned to their houses, the ground floors of which are generally without serious injury.

The public health remains so far better than might have been expected. There has, indeed, been considerable mortality amongst the children of the poor from measles and scarlet fever, and there are also some cases of typhoid and small-pox, but as yet no general epidemic.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

No. 96.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received December* 16.)

(No. 436.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 8, 1901.

WITH reference to Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 387 of the 12th November, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copies of despatches from His Majesty's Consular Officers at Erzeroum and Moush reporting on the attitude of Russian officials towards the movement among the Armenian inhabitants of the latter town towards conversion to the Orthodox Church.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure 1 in No. 96.

Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 18. Confidential.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, November* 25, 1901.

IN reference to the concluding paragraph of my despatch No. 16 of the 18th and to Vice-Consul Freeman's of the 20th instant, I have ascertained that Mr. Freeman's information is substantially correct. At least, the Patriarch in Constantinople wrote to the Bishop here that there was no inclination on the part of the Russian Embassy to support the demand of the Mush Armenians for admission into the Orthodox Church, and that he should therefore advise the Mush Prelate to confidently continue his opposition to it, working in harmony with the local authorities and endeavouring to convince his flock that their agitation could not possibly lead to any practical result.

The Russian Consul-General in this place appears also to have employed the same language towards the Bishop as he has used in conversation with myself, characterizing the movement as both senseless and inopportune.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

Inclosure 2 in No. 96.

Vice-Consul Freeman to Sir N. O'Conor.

(Confidential.)
Sir, *Mush, November* 20, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to report that the movement among the Gregorians here in favour of union with the Russian Orthodox Church began in consequence of the series of murders that were committed by Turks and Kurds between the months of May and August. I have been unable to ascertain who it was that actually originated the idea, but it appears to have been first discussed by the younger men, who succeeded in carrying their seniors with them to such an extent that some 2,800 or 3,000 males out of an estimated Armenian population of 7,500—counting 1,500 houses or families at an average of five persons each—signed a petition praying for admission to the Russian Church. The petition was presented secretly to the Russian Vice-Consul from Van, M. Toumansky (who arrived at Mush on the 11th September), and appears to have been forwarded by him to the Russian Embassy. All, or nearly all, of the signatories are, I believe, inhabitants of the town of Mush. I was at first told that few, if any, of the clergy had joined in the movement, but I am now led to believe that, as might be expected, many of the "derders" (married priests) signed it, while the "vartabets" (unmarried priests) held aloof. I am informed that Pohannes vartabet Muradian, an old man, who was at the time *locum tenens* at the Gregorian Prelacy, exhorted his co-religionists from the pulpit to abstain from the movement, but was obliged to report to the Patriarchate that he had no influence with them.

The present Prelate, Khosrof, who arrived after the petition had been forwarded, tells me that he looks upon this "conversion" scheme as absurd, and that, according to information received from the spiritual head of the Church at Erzeroum, the Russian

Government have refused to countenance it. On the other hand, according to the *locum tenens* of the Catholic Armenian Bishop, who is of course not directly concerned in the matter, M. Toumansky is said to have assured the petitioners that a favourable reply will be sent in the course of a few months. His Reverence also tells me that on three separate occasions he has broached the subject in conversation with my Russian colleague, but that M. Toumansky only replies that he is not a priest, and has come here for other purposes than those suggested. But both last year and this year he seems to have confined his visits outside Mush almost exclusively to the monasteries. He did not even visit Spaghank last year after the massacre which appears to have taken place there, although he was within easy reach of it.

According to some accounts, the fact that no reply to the Petition has yet been received is having a discouraging effect, both on the signatories themselves and on the waverers. According to others, M. Toumansky is still receiving applications for enrolment.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. G. FREEMAN.

No. 97.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received December* 16.)

(No. 439.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 9, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum reporting the formation of a new regiment of Hamidieh cavalry.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 97.

Consul Lamb to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 21.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, December* 2, 1901.

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Military Attaché to His Britannic Majesty's Embassy, that a new regiment of Hamidieh is in course of formation in this vilayet. Its Firman has been issued, though I believe that no officer of the regular forces has yet been attached to it.

This regiment will bear the number 62 and be drawn from the "Tahar" Kurds, who are sedentary, non-tribal Kurds occupying the neighbourhood of Tahar (or Daghar) Ghedik, between Deli Baba and Alashghird. Their Lieutenant-Colonel, I am told, is to be a certain Agha Bey, who is at feud with the Zillanli of Eyoub Pasha.

The formation of this regiment is the more to be regretted, in that the Tahar Kurds already enjoy a most unenviable reputation as cut-purses, and, if need be, cut-throats also (your Excellency may remember the case of the American bicyclist Lenz, who was murdered near Tahar village in 1894), and that they control one of the most difficult points on the Bayezid road, over which passes the whole of the Persian transit trade. The Hamidiehs of Shereef Bey, Hadji Agha and Hafizullah have long since killed the Persian trade of Bashkaleh and Van, and, now that the foot-pads of Tahar have also received their license, the far more important caravan trade between Tabriz and Trebizonde must be regarded as seriously imperilled.

While on the subject of Hamidieh, I may note that Issa Pasha, the Liva commanding the 1st, or Kara Kilisseh, Brigade, died last July, since when his post has been occupied by Zekeria Bey, Colonel of the 19th Cavalry Regiment, though I do not think this officer has yet been gazetted to the command.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HARRY H. LAMB.

No. 98.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received December* 23.)

(No. 441.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 12, 1901.

WITH reference to Sir N. O'Conor's despatch No. 353 of the 27th September, I have the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting on the progress made with the construction of the Damascus–Hedjaz Railway.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

Inclosure in No. 98.

Consul Richards to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 73.)
Sir, *Damascus, December* 4, 1901.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 56 of the 3rd September, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the construction of the Damascus–Mezerib section of the Hedjaz Railway appears to be making fairly rapid progress, the earthworks, together with their accompanying "travaux d'art" such as small bridges, stone-faced water-courses, &c., being completed over a distance of 65 kilom. (40⅝ miles), *i.e.*, about two-thirds of the whole length of the section. Ballast though ready to hand has only been actually laid over a few hundred yards. Quite recently there has been a marked disposition to slacken off the work, caused, I imagine, by the report which is ever gaining ground, even in quarters which are usually well informed, viz., that Count Vitalis is again in Treaty with the Ottoman Government for the sale to them of the existing (French) Hauran line. This rumour has been so often current here and has been so often officially and positively contradicted that I hesitate to refer to it again, nor would I do so had I not spoken to the Vali on the subject, and received from him a somewhat vague reply in striking contrast with the emphatically negative answers I met with from him when mooting this question on previous occasions. One thing is certain, viz., that about three weeks ago M. Chenu, the Traffic Manager of the Beyrout–Damascus–Hauran Railway, together with Herr von Capp, Chief Engineer on the Ryak–Hama Construction Works, and a Sectional Engineer (M. Chapottot), went on a tour of inspection down the projected Hejaz line as far as the Wady Zerka, below Geresh, and returned. It was said at the time that Count Vitalis had, at the special request of the Ottoman Government, asked these gentlemen to go and take a look at the line with a view to their forming and giving an opinion to those most interested in the undertaking as to how far the best line of country had been selected, and whether the work of construction was making satisfactory progress. It has been suggested that this journey was not altogether unconnected with the projected sale of the Hauran line.

Signor Labella, the Second Engineer on the Hedjaz line, has left the country, the reason being that the Government had, by the advice of Herr Meissner, the Chief Engineer, dispensed with his services as soon as the first year for which his contract had been signed expired.

As regards the Mezerib–Dera'a section of the line, I understand that the work has not been pushed so much of late, though, on the other hand, I understand that the line has been surveyed as far as Amman.

The construction of the Ryak-Hama Railway is, I hear, being carried on with the greatest possible expedition.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 99.

Mr. de Bunsen to the Marquess of Lansdowne.—(*Received December* 23.)

(No. 444.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 16, 1901.

I HAVE received from Samos a Memorandum, dated the 11th November last, and signed by nine Deputies of the Samian Assembly, which purports to set forth the complaints of the minority of the Assembly against the action of the Prince and of the majority. It states that the legally elected Deputies of seven constituencies were supplanted in the Assembly by others who, as officials, were ineligible. By this means a majority was obtained by whom the administration of the island was screened against any investigation of its malpractices, by which the true interests of the island have been sacrificed to those of a few favoured individuals. The Prince had promised to represent the matter to the Porte, but nothing had been done. He was the blind tool of the majority, and indorsed their Decrees without inquiry except when forbidden by the Porte, whom he was afraid to offend. The remedy lay in the appointment of a less pliable Prince, and in the amendment of the Charter of the island so as to render the Prince independent of the Porte by placing his Decrees under the guarantee of the Protecting Powers.

Under these circumstances the minority of the Chamber appeal to England as one of the Powers to which the island is indebted for its autonomy.

I have acknowledged the receipt of this communication, which has also been received by the Russian, but not by the French Embassy.

I have, &c.

(Signed) M. DE BUNSEN.

No. 100.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Conor.

(No. 294.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, December* 27, 1901.

I HAVE received Mr. de Bunsen's despatch No. 433 of the 5th instant, reporting that he had seen a statement in the Turkish press to the effect that the Ottoman Government intended taking steps to suspend the service of Messrs. Lynch's steamers on the Tigris.

I approve the action of Mr. de Bunsen in calling the attention of Tewfik Pasha to this report.

I am, &c.

(Signed) LANSDOWNE.